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One Year Later

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Wilhelm Lunen

The British Railway (Western Region)

Strike — May, 1954

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John Clarkson

ATOMIC POLICY AND THE ROSENBERG CASE — ONE YEAR LATER

A YEAR has passed since the electrocution of the Rosenbergs as convicted atom spies. It might appear that the circumstances of this case are buried and pretty well forgotten. Yet the facts fester close to the surface of events and could erupt at any moment, given the right pre-conditions.

There are at least four immediately current issues of top-drawer importance linked with the Rosenberg case. (1) Loyalty-security at the Army radar laboratory at Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey. This is a focal point in the McCarthy-Army dispute. Charges of espionage at Ft. Monmouth are an extension of the Rosenberg conviction. Roy M. Cohn, McCarthy's chief counsel, laid the groundwork for the Ft. Monmouth investigation as one of the Government's prosecutors in the Rosenberg trial. (2) The secret loyalty-security action now pending against Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, war-time head of the A-bomb development project at Los Alamos, which action seems likely to be broadened to include other high atomic advisors. (3) The extreme security section in the recommended revision of the Atomic Energy Act recently placed before Congress by the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. Adoption of these Draconian regulations and penalties (including death for numerous infractions) would freeze communication completely in the atomic area. (4) The violent inner struggle now shaking the Atomic Energy Commission and its top management echelons. This is an advanced phase, as the Rosenberg affair was an earlier phase, of the bid by big business through its military adjunct to wrest complete control of the atomic establishment. Admiral-banker Lewis L. Strauss, Commission chairman, is consolidating his position as atomic dictator. With the domestic situation seemingly in hand, American big business for which Strauss fronts is moving toward world-wide atomic monopoly as much for insurance against the threat of a liberated atom to an economy of scarcity, as for the profits directly involved.

The spectre of espionage, and especially atomic espionage, was given flesh and blood dimension to Americans by the Rosenbergs' conviction and execution. Death clinched it. The case has become the stock example cited by all and sundry as irrefragable proof of the clear and present danger of the Communist spy in our midst. And this fear feeds upon itself and grows. After an Oppenheimer who is free from possible taint?

If it could be shown that the case against the Rosenbergs was largely contrived; that they were done-in by perjured testimony, judicial slugging, and a cravenly ineffectual defense (if not studied betrayal by their own attorney and defense committee), it might be expected that the whole fantastic superstructure of error and deception erected on this sorry block-

ing would totter into the void. But it is necessary to get a hearing and open-minded consideration for a strange and shameful story. At this juncture it is doubtful if the facts of the case, regardless of how carefully and persuasively they might be set forth, could win wide credence in America, so long as the immediate pseudo-prosperity is geared to war preparation, and there is in consequence a widespread emotional need to rationalize atomic armament. But when the end of this cul-de-sac is reached and the political current begins to move in the opposite direction, then a full exposé of the Rosenberg case will become both possible and necessary and is likely to be one of the first issues seized upon by the revisionists. So far it has not grown smaller, but larger.

In getting to the bottom of the Rosenberg affair it is necessary to have a theory. So far, theories publicly advanced on the Rosenberg case have not been fruitful. One wholly inadequate hypothesis is that the frame-up was primarily a classic fascist move against Jewish progressives, first for the purpose of immediate intimidation, and second to prepare a scapegoat for the future. It is true that intimidation of Jewish intellectuals and professionals has resulted from the execution of the Rosenbergs, and Jewish scientists have been singled out, notably in the Ft. Monmouth investigations, where in addition even casual acquaintance with Julius Rosenberg as far back as college days was taken as *prima facie* proof of disloyalty. But it is tenuous reasoning to deduce, accordingly, an actual fascist plot, and until names can be named and the finger placed definitely upon actual conspirators, such speculations must yield to hypotheses that have a more secure footing upon verifiable facts. Besides, the theory of an anti-Semitic plot of fascist contrivance has the serious disadvantage of affording cover for the Stalinists whose strange and sinister role in the Rosenberg affair during the Slansky trial period calls for the most searching ventilation.

To make a realistic appraisal of the Rosenberg affair, to discover its origin and to understand its function, it is necessary to be aware in some detail of the twists and turns of the desperate undercover struggle for the control of the atom that began in the United States almost as soon as experimentation began on the bomb, and still continues. The immolation of the Rosenbergs was an episode in that struggle. Their involvement was contrived by the military-business interest to extract the utmost advantage from a fortuitous turn at the beginning of 1950 which placed them on top, a position they have retained and have made the most of. It appears that the Rosenbergs never knew what hit them. They were run over by a hidden train of events as mysterious to the Rosenbergs as they still are to the general public to-day. While the unfortunate couple were Stalinists, beyond doubt, and while it is more than likely that they may have attempted to pass information to our Soviet allies of the war period, they were none the less pathetic pawns in a game of death of a depth of which they displayed little or no inkling.

The Background of the Rosenberg Case

The atomic program from its inception early in the war until the bomb was dropped on Japan in August, 1945, was sealed in super-secrecy and wholly in the hands of the military. The scientists were only hired help, and they found it difficult and irksome to adapt themselves and their habits

of work to the military mold. The ranking leaders of big business who personally directed the military establishment, including the late James Forrestal of Dillon, Reed & Co. and Admiral-banker Lewis Strauss of the Wall Street firm of Kuhn, Loeb & Co., intended that strict secrecy and untrammelled control by the military should continue on undiminished into peace time. To that end the May-Johnson bill was framed, and arrangements were made to slip it through Congress in the dark o' the moon. Big business could not risk the inevitably revolutionary impact of a free atom upon their precariously balanced economy of scarcity. Business leaders foresaw the profit potential in a world-wide atomic cartel. Further it seemed that global military supremacy in the coming era might be cheaply maintained by a monopoly of atomic weapons.

But the strategists of big business had failed to allow for several road blocks that rose up to shut off the direct route to their objectives. Widespread public apprehension fired by the sudden brutality of the Japanese atomic holocaust crystallized into strong popular sentiment for demilitarization of the atom. The scientific fraternity who had built the bomb developed an uneasy conscience. Being closest to the new force, awareness of its dangers as well as of its promise for peaceful use bore heavily upon them. Besides they were sick of military curbs. In addition a wide popular anti-militarist reaction at the end of the war helped stiffen the opposition to the May-Johnson bill. The bill died in committee, while something of a crusade got underway for entirely different atomic legislation designed to ensure civilian control, public ownership of atomic resources in the nature of a public trust, and a development program directed to the productive use of the new force for raising the standard of living and augmenting the general welfare. The result was the Atomic Energy Act of 1946, also known as the McMahon Act. It has been called the most radical law of the land. The atomic establishment it set up likewise has been referred to as a "socialist island". Liberals jubilated over its passage. But in sober retrospect it is plain that this law in its application has not turned out to be anywhere near as radical as it first looked on paper.

It may be deduced that astute agents of the military-business interest participated in framing the McMahon Act. Its liberal intentions are subverted throughout by loose and ambiguous language, "escape" clauses, and provisions that steal back with the left hand what is generously given by the right. Having secured a beachhead in the law, the subverters have pushed forward relentlessly. In the eight years since the adoption of the original act the military-business cabal has by degrees usurped complete and undisputed command of the atomic program. They have managed to bend and distort it as they wished. And finally the changes in the original act now pending before Congress on recommendation of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy will hand the squatters a warranty deed and legalize the biggest steal ever made on the public domain.

To remove the menace of military control, at least to put the generals out of the driver's seat, the McMahon Act provided for a five-man civilian commission of unprecedented powers to hold and to manage the atomic establishment. Notwithstanding this intention of the law one of the original appointees was the arch-militarist, Admiral-banker Lewis L. Strauss, the same who now, eight years later, has assumed virtual dictatorship of the

atomic program in the dual role of Chairman of the Commission and as Assistant to the President on Atomic Affairs. The Admiral who was in opposition to more liberal members of the Commission from the first, by intrigue, power politics, and stubborn infighting blocked the development of atomic power for industrial use. It was Strauss who in a sense single-handedly forced through the decision to build the H-bomb at the beginning of 1950 against the majority judgement of the Commission and the unanimous recommendation of the Commission's General Advisory Committee of atomic scientists. Aside from the far-reaching military consequences of this fateful decision in which was implicit a strategy of "instant and massive retaliation", it at once stopped work on the well-advanced breeder reactor project at the Knolls Atomic Laboratory. The resulting indefinite postponement of atomic power for public and industrial use conformed to the interest of the privately-owned utilities network dominated to considerable extent by Strauss's Wall Street banking firm of Kuhn, Loeb & Co.

Another weakness of the atomic establishment set up by the McMahon Act was its plethora of advisory and liaison committees, the personnel of which was drawn largely from military and business sources. The chief function of these committees turned out in practice to be obstructional. Time and again they vetoed progress by their excessive caution, indecision, and general policy of delay.

But above all the work of the Commission was hamstrung by investigations, by Congressional sniping, and harassment from the reactionary press and radio. The chief target was always Chairman David E. Lilienthal. The main issue was loyalty-security. An earnest of what was to come were the rantings of Senator McKellar in his violent filibuster against Lilienthal's original confirmation in 1947, when he adduced Lilienthal's background as head of the TVA as proof of red ties. The sad fact is that as time went on Lilienthal was to spend so much of his strength defending himself before committees that little remained for the constructive aspects of his job. He once summed up the situation in his wry characterization of his role as that of a "professional witness". Thus it happened that while the attention and efforts of the Commission was forced unduly into politics and public relations, altogether too much of a free hand in the running of the atomic establishment was allowed prime contractors from big business, giants of industrial monopoly like DuPont and General Electric, who were on the scene from the start and busily boring from within.

Then in May, 1949, Senator Hickenlooper, ranking minority member of the Joint Congressional Committee, and formerly identified closely with Strauss, gave a statement to the press placing charges of "incredible mismanagement" against the Atomic Energy Commission. Apparently Hickenlooper had taken his cue from Fulton Lewis, Jr., who on 10th May had publicly alleged that AEC student fellowships were being granted to Communists. It was bruited about that the Senator, soon to face re-election, was out to build himself a campaign issue. This may have figured in Hickenlooper's motivation, but it is plain now, in retrospect, that the investigation of the AEC that ensued was an integral part of the same deep strategy to seize the atom which a year later produced the arrests of Greenglass and the Rosenbergs.

1949 was a year of trials, and by that time the big Red train was moving down the tracks at full speed. The investigation of Senator Hickenlooper's charges against the AEC opened 1st June. In progress was the trial of the Communist Eleven under Judge Medina, begun in March and not to end until October. Also in progress was the first Coplon espionage trial that ended in July with a verdict of guilty, set aside, however, because of the Government's illegal use of evidence obtained by wire tapping. And coincident with the AEC investigation which soon for all practical purposes turned into a trial of Chairman David Lilienthal, the Alger Hiss perjury trial opened during the first week of June, after a ten-month prelude of Hiss-Chambers testimony before a Congressional committee sensationalized in the press.

The AEC investigation opened, according to *U.S. News and World Report* for 3rd June, 1949, as "one of the gaudiest shows Capitol Hill has seen in years" — a jam of spectators, flash bulbs popping, "reporters dashing for their wires with hot bulletins". But as this conservative news magazine went on to say, "... underneath the glitter a battle is being fought that is not revealed in the headlines . . . what it all simmers down to is this: *Atomic Control*. Military elements are trying again to obtain control of atomic-energy development". What this magazine did not say was that what actuated the military was the basic interest of big business.

Hickenlooper opened with a shotgun blast. Anything that might conceivably hurt the AEC was dragged into the charges. Even such a matter as the "buckled roofs" of 350 dwelling units at Los Alamos. But it was personnel security and the loyalty issue that was pushed to the front of the stage and that took over the show. The FBI was brought in and figured largely in the final stages of the investigation. While the Hoover apparatus could not openly side with Hickenlooper and maintain its zealously guarded fraud of impartial fact-finding, and while actually it had no damaging information to reveal against Lilienthal, still its mere participation in the hearings tended to generate a climate of suspicion and to bolster Hickenlooper's imputations. As usual the FBI made headlines. As far as the FBI was concerned the hearings had two effects that were later to bear strange fruit. It is certain that the FBI was activated to rake over the subject of atomic espionage in hopes of turning up something new, or something old that had been overlooked or forgotten. Second, the prestige of the FBI was linked more urgently than before to this area of investigation, and increased pressure was put upon the FBI to find something substantial to back up its threats and empty talk.

As for the hearings, after forty-five separate meetings, twenty-four in public, and twenty-one in private, these last dealing mostly with FBI reports on personnel-security cases, they finally petered out in the latter part of August for lack of a quorum. Although Hickenlooper's charges died out in a whimper, a lot of his mud did stick. Lilienthal was formally absolved on all counts, but the majority report of the Joint Committee clearing him and the AEC did not come out until the middle of October.

In the meantime a staggering development had exploded the atomic *status quo*. On 23rd September President Truman announced to the world that the Russians had detonated a fission device. The conclusion was immediately and generally drawn that America's monopoly of atomic

weapons was broken — the monopoly that nearly everyone was banking on to last for at least another decade. Furthermore, in the popular view, this was taken as conclusive evidence of the dastardly efficiency of Russian atomic espionage. The scientists, and even General Groves as early as 1945, had pointed out that no atomic secret remained after the atomic explosion over Japan proved to the world that such bombs would work. Informed persons understood quite well that the achievement of atomic weapons by the Russians depended primarily upon how soon, and if, the Russians could muster the economic resources required. Could the backward and faltering Russian economy meet the requirements and stand the strain of an atomic weapons effort? That was the realistic question, but instead of its sober consideration, the American public was deluded by comic-book sensationalism involving a non-existent atomic secret. The absurd notion prevailed, as it still does, that all the Russians needed was that their agents should get hold of certain magic atomic formulae and diagrams. The Government's case against the Rosenbergs was posited upon this illusion, and as Irwin Edelman first pointed out, the eager capitulation of the Rosenberg defense upon this point was fatal — quite literally so, as it turned out — an incredible and unforgivable error, if not out-and-out betrayal.

President Truman's announcement of the Russian atomic achievement came at a most opportune moment for the military faction, not only removing the sting from the fiasco of the Hickenlooper hearings of the past summer; but more than that, it definitely put the Strauss group back on top in the atomic free-for-all. The coincidence, here, is remarkable, and, as will be seen, is but the first of a chain of coincidences that unfold with uncanny precision of timing.

Knowledge of the Russian explosion is claimed to have been obtained through a detection technique established at the insistence and through the initiative of Admiral Strauss. The detection mechanism has been revealed to involve an elaborate correlation of intelligence reports, meteorological, seismological, and other scientific observations in widely dispersed locations around the globe. Relating and interpreting the data from such diverse sources is of course a delicate and selective process on the top-level of secrecy at the military center. *Time* magazine, in its issue of 3rd October, 1949, set the probable date of the Russian explosion as 1st September, and stated that the President, Secretary of Defense Johnson and "fewer than two dozen men [presumably military personnel] knew in the early stages before Lilienthal was summoned from Martha's Vineyard", where he was resting after the Hickenlooper hearings and possibly reading the proofs of his public relations tract, *This I Do Believe* that was to be published in October. One of the most striking things about the whole business is that, as *Fortune* states in its May, 1953, article on the H-bomb, *hardly was the Strauss detection apparatus set up than the Russian explosion occurred.*

Another notable thing was the news blackout covering the report of an earlier Russian atomic explosion, which was at least as well authenticated as numerous items that get a big play in the press. Admiral Ellis M. Zacharias, onetime deputy head of the Office of Naval Intelligence, later freelance journalist and political observer, recounts in his book, *Behind*

Closed Doors, 1950, how he released to the press on 1st, 2nd and 3rd October of 1949 a report he had received from Scandinavian sources that in October of the previous year a Soviet "atomic monstrosity" far different from our A-bombs went off accidentally somewhere in the Karakum Desert, killing hundreds and maiming thousands and causing enormous property damage. One obvious reason for concealing at this time a report of a Soviet atomic setback of this magnitude would be to prevent its deflating effect on popular apprehension of the Soviet atomic menace, which Strauss and his group were so industriously pumping up. It is significant to recall in this connection the statement by Truman shortly after he left office to the effect that he very much doubted if the Soviets even at that late date had a deliverable A-bomb, which maverick frankness brought down upon his head no small amount of denial, rebuke, and indignant comment from high "defense" levels.

Following the President's 23rd September announcement of a Soviet atomic explosion, Admiral Strauss lost little time in pressing his new advantage. On 5th October Strauss addressed a memo to Chairman Lilienthal calling for a "crash" program to develop the "super", as being America's only chance to hold her own in the atomic arms race. The "super", that is to say the thermonuclear fusion bomb now materialized in the H-bomb, had been talked about among scientists as early as 1942. Notable theoretical advances toward its achievement had been worked out in 1945 and 1947 by Dr. Edward Teller, the AEC physicist, under whose direction the H-bomb was eventually developed. But so long as the American A-bomb monopoly seemed assured no one ventured immediate commitment to an uncertain and enormously costly fusion bomb program.

At the beginning of October, 1949, the AEC was divided four to one against Admiral Strauss on the "super". It was not the first time the Admiral had stood alone as a minority of one on the Commission, as for example when he opposed the shipment of radioactive isotopes to England and other friendly nations for medical and other non-military experimentation. A few weeks after Strauss took his stand for the H-bomb, the new commissioner, Gordon Dean, came over to Strauss's side, if he had not actually been there all the time, and shortly joined with Strauss in a letter to the President going over the heads of the Commission. Considering the teamwork of Strauss and Dean that was to become apparent later on, it may well be that Dean had purposely held back at first in order not to make it too obvious, especially as it is likely that the military-business clique had already lined up Dean as the next chairman of the Commission, and were grooming him as their dark-horse candidate to edge out the ranking liberals, Lilienthal and Pike. Gordon Dean's direct responsibility in the Rosenberg case, not only as Chairman of the AEC, but as an experienced criminal lawyer and former assistant prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials has as yet remained unopened to public view.

Not only was the majority of the AEC against Strauss's H-bomb proposal, but on 29th October the General Advisory Committee comprised of eight of America's most distinguished scientists headed by Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer and set up by the Atomic Energy Act of 1946 to advise the Commission, reported against the "crash" program. Only Dr. Fermi,

Fortune states, sided with the Strauss proposal in the deliberations of the Committee.

The loss of these preliminary skirmishes meant little to Strauss. As usual he went over the head of the AEC. By the end of December Senator Brian McMahon, Chairman of the Joint Committee, was openly supporting Strauss, and shortly thereafter additional pressure on behalf of the Strauss proposal was applied on the President by Defense Secretary Louis Johnson and Secretary of State Dean Acheson. According to *Fortune* magazine, the man who may have prevailed finally upon the President to OK the H-bomb program was Truman's special advisor on security matters, Sidney W. Souers. Souers, a wealthy St. Louis businessman of wide connections, had turned up in Washington in the Navy Department in 1940 when World War II was shaping up, just like Strauss, who at the same time became Secretary James Forrestal's special assistant. While Strauss was in Ordnance and the Navy's relations with industry, Souers was in Intelligence, later becoming first head of the Central Intelligence Agency. Both Strauss and Souers attained Naval Reserve Admiral rank.

It is almost certain that the final trump Strauss pulled out of his sleeve in winning over Truman to the H-bomb was the Klaus Fuchs revelations. The White House press secretary did admit that the President knew about Fuchs before his arrest on 3rd February, 1950, but took the trouble to deny that the President had such knowledge before he made his decision on the H-bomb program. His decision was publicly announced 31st January. How much prior to this date the decision was actually made we do not know. If the President was apprised of Fuchs' guilt before his confession, somebody must have been pretty certain that it would take place, and must have based their expectations upon sources of prior knowledge that have not yet been publicly revealed. While it would be going far afield to surmise that Fuchs' confession was phony and that he did not pass information to persons whom *he thought* were Russian agents, still there is much substance for a theory that American intelligence knew about Fuch's defection long before it was allowed to come out and that his confession was contrived to come when it did for specific political purposes.

It seems that Fuchs on his visits to the United States and to the atomic installation at Los Alamos had had direct contact with Dr. Edward Teller and his work on theoretical thermonuclear mechanics. *Fortune* ("Hidden Struggle for the H-Bomb", May, 1953) states that Fuchs' access to Teller's work was "a clincher" for Strauss. Is this observation of the semi-official Luce publications to be interpreted that Strauss's decision on the H-bomb had not been "clinched" and double-clinched when he put out his 5th October memo, or does it mean that Strauss knew about the Fuchs leak even prior to October? Leaving aside questions of Strauss's own motivation, it is certain he would have recognized that the Fuchs affair would act as a "clincher" for the President and the general public. While it is only a speculation that the Fuchs defection forcefully presented by the President's special advisor, Admiral Souers, was the culminating argument that "convinced" Truman, it is incontrovertible fact that the sensation of the Fuchs case when it burst into ken at the beginning of February, 1950, had an explosive effect on American public opinion, proving devastatingly

effective in selling the H-bomb idea and in crushing out deep and widespread opposition.

The announcement of the H-bomb program and the implied military strategy of defense by threat of massive retaliation stirred profound misgivings in informed quarters. The scientists were generally not happy about the decision, and many were outspoken in opposition. During the spring and summer of 1950 the *Scientific American* ran a searching series of articles by outstanding authorities, who, exploring the issue from the widest perspective, reached a consistently negative verdict. But in the mass media there was no reasonable discussion. Common sense evaporated in the hysteria of the spy hunt. The timing of the Fuchs confession, following as it did directly upon Truman's H-bomb announcement, was the culmination of a series of remarkable "coincidences". If they did not fall according to mortal plan, one would need to fall back on supernatural intervention.

From the Fuchs to the Rosenberg Case

The FBI takes credit for catching Fuchs. Indeed it gloats over the case as one of its brightest jewels. What actually happened is not publicly known. But there are at least two possibilities worth speculating upon. One is that the Hickenlooper hearings in the summer of 1949 spurred the FBI into frantic effort to uncover at least one bona fide atomic spy, preferably a British one. Thus in reworking their files the FBI would have gone over their old dossier on the Canadian Spy Ring Case of 1946 which had yielded a list carrying the name of Dr. Fuchs of Edinburgh. This and other known details like Fuchs' radical background as a youth in Germany could have given rise to a hunch, which confidently blown up and presented to the British authorities, might have activated the investigation that culminated in Fuchs' confession. Actually, if this were true, it would not put the FBI in too good a light, for because of the long delay in apprehending Fuchs, obtuseness and negligence could be charged against them. Possibly this is why Nathaniel Weyl in his book *The Battle Against Disloyalty*, 1951, states that the way Fuchs was caught is still a highly classified secret, aggressively denying that the Canadian spy notebook or captured Nazi records of Fuchs' youthful Communist activity had anything to do with his exposure. For Weyl, it appears, is something of an apologist for the FBI and his book seems to have been written to counteract Lowenthal's substantial indictment of the FBI and its methods written in 1950. But assuming Weyl's negative statement to be true, so far as it goes, it could very well be that American intelligence did have knowledge of Fuchs' defection prior to this confession and even a considerable time prior. But as this information was obtained, according to Weyl, from confidential sources, there would be likelihood that indictment followed by open trial would be awkward, and a conviction difficult to obtain without opening secrets to public view. The much neater and surer way would be to induce a confession, if that could be managed. And arranging to have such a confession break when there was a political need for it could be managed by the calculated application of psychological pressure, as was brought to bear upon Klaus Fuchs. (Alan Moorehead, *The Traitors*, 1952). So it might be that the Fuchs case had been kept on ice for some time.

Considering the great extent to which it is now apparent that the

Communist apparatus in the United States has been penetrated by FBI agents, it could easily be that Fuchs was under FBI surveillance almost from the beginning of his defection. It is not excluded, (and no attempt has ever been made to prove otherwise in connection with the prosecution of Harry Gold) that Fuchs' data could have passed from Gold directly into the hands of American counter-spies. Regardless of what he intended, Fuchs never knew, it seems, nor do we, whether or not his information reached the Russians. On this all-important point his confession was completely incompetent. Mere intent was accepted as consummation. It was likewise so in the Rosenberg case, except that the Rosenbergs never admitted to spying. One of the strangest things about that strange affair is that there was not the smallest shred or scintilla of objective proof that any data alleged to have been passed by the Rosenbergs ever reached the Russians.

Bearing out the possibility of the intervention of American counter-spies, *U.S. News and World Report*, 17th February, 1950, remarked upon a "hint in the Coplon trial that the FBI may have a man in the Soviet Embassy . . . Mr. Hoover may have established what amounts to a 'Fifth Column' inside Communist circles". Developments since that was written, including the continuous emergence into daylight of FBI plants within the Communist Party, not only adds confirmation, but indicates that perhaps the FBI even exercises considerable control over the American Communist Party by an army of hidden agents within, who are chiefly concerned to nurse along this exotic growth whose continued existence is the FBI's principal *raison d'être*. It is not entirely fantastic and excluded that Fuchs might have been deceived from the beginning by American counter-intelligence agents who encouraged his defection as a move to compromise British scientists, toward the overall objective of shutting off the British completely from access to American atomic data. But it is not likely such a trump would have been held so long in the hole. It should not be forgotten, in this connection, that American business interests were hard at work quite early in the Manhattan District project to shut out the British from atomic knowledge. One of their great fears has been that the British, driven by their chronic internal fuel and power shortage, would too quickly develop atomic power for peacetime use.

Whatever the truth about the hidden genesis of the Fuchs case may be, the objective effects of Fuchs' arrest are plain. In Washington, emergency meeting followed emergency meeting. Top policy groups and committees sat in extraordinary session. Opponents of the H-bomb were immobilized. The military faction pressed its advantage. One of the witnesses who testified *in extenso* before the Joint Congressional Committee was FBI chief, J. Edgar Hoover. He let himself go. *U.S. News and World Report*, 17th February, 1950, featured some of his amazing assertions. Spying in the U.S. at that time was a "large, highly organized business". Russia, driving toward war, was determined to get America's atomic secrets, and had an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 secret Communist agents in the United States for that purpose. There were 54,000 card-carrying Communists in the country and no less than 486,000 fellow travelers — 540,000 in all, and each "a potential spy" — over half a million potential atomic leaks. Summing up, the article stated: "Congressmen let it be known that they

were gravely impressed with the account of Communist activity in the U.S. that FBI Director Hoover outlined. They said he could have all the funds he wants".

If the FBI had not been committed before, it stood committed now to produce at least one flesh-and-blood atomic spy. Admiral Zacharias in his book *Behind Closed Doors*, published in 1950, was able to say "... it is a matter of public record that no Soviet atomic spy of first magnitude has ever been apprehended in the United States". Here was a void that had to be filled. Not merely was the prestige of the FBI at stake. The military-business faction that had swung into high gear with its H-bomb program under the impetus of the Fuchs revelations needed more of the same to accelerate their advantage. They needed the push of a Rosenberg case, just as the FBI needed such a case. No clearer or stronger motive than this could possibly be established. And the time was ripe for a Rosenberg case. Weyl has called 1950 "the year of the Great Red Hunt on Capitol Hill". Hiss was convicted of perjury in January. McCarthy initiated charges against the State Department in his Wheeling, W.V., speech, 9th February. Judith Coplon was found guilty in March. Hearings on the Remington Red ties continued through April, May, and June. Fuchs' courier, Harry Gold, was arrested and confessed in May.

The theory that follows for the Rosenberg case is this. When the Fuchs confession broke, or possibly even before, the FBI and related government agencies began an intensive search for material from which to construct an atomic spy case. It is natural that they would turn to the well-plowed field of the Los Alamos atomic project, where previously charges and security investigations, as we now know, had extended from Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer at the top to the five lowly enlisted men convicted in 1947 and 1948 of the theft of classified documents and photographs, but not of espionage. They would easily have gotten on the track of another Los Alamos sergeant, one David Greenglass, whose brother-in-law, Julius Rosenberg, had previously been removed from defense work as a poor security risk. Undercover agents in the New York and Washington sections of the Communist Party, like Mrs. Mary S. Markward, who revealed herself in the Thierman trial in 1953, would have been well acquainted with the details of Rosenberg's political activity. Further, Julius was an electrical engineer with a considerable acquaintance among scientists and technical people. Here it was, the whole thing in embryo. What remained to be done was to fill in the gaps, shore up the weak spots, and knit the whole structure firmly into an airtight case. If evidence was lacking or inconclusive, that was no insurmountable defect. "Facts" can be, and are, made to order. Besides, rigorous proof is unnecessary under the conditions of public hysteria and judicial bias that obtained in the Rosenberg case. A thorough and impartial review of the case would certainly have revealed several substantial instances of perjury and fraud, requiring that the conviction be set aside. That is why it was never reviewed.

But the dishonesty and trickery was not confined to the prosecution. The defense was tarred from the same pot. A candid defense could have saved the lives of the Rosenbergs, even though they might have drawn prison sentences. But candor was ruled out because it would have exposed the corruption and political chicanery of the Stalinist apparatus that

managed the defense. That such chicanery was compounded by collusion with the prosecution is not to be excluded from a working theory.

Responsibility for the Rosenberg affair extends beyond the FBI and the Justice Department. It is exceedingly unlikely that Gordon Dean, who became chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission in the summer of 1950, was ignorant of what went on. The trial transcript indicates that the AEC took a special interest in the proceedings, sent observers to the trial, and took the extraordinary measure of *temporarily* declassifying information about the structure of the bomb so that it could be used in connection with Greenglass's confession. Altogether the AEC took a close interest in the management and outcome of the trial. This should be weighed with the further facts that Chairman Dean was a lawyer and a specialist and professor of criminal law; that he was a former assistant in the Justice Department and closely identified with the FBI; and that he had served as an assistant prosecutor in charge of publicity at the Nuremberg trials under chief prosecutor Justice Robert H. Jackson.¹

This latter fact, that Chairman Dean had participated in the prosecution at Nuremberg, is of particular significance, for the trials at Nuremberg and the Rosenberg trial are political trials of the same *genre*. The Nuremberg trials,² lineal descendants of the Moscow trials, followed neither the principles nor the procedures of American jurisprudence. There was not even a pretence to democracy. The Rosenberg trial, arising in a different setting and under different circumstances, could not over-step the forms of American law, but nevertheless utilized the same totalitarian mechanisms developed at Moscow and Nuremberg.

First, there was that perversion of juridical function whereby a trial becomes a sounding board for propaganda instead of an honest tribunal for the determination of fact. In the Rosenberg trial this took the form of

¹ Dean, as publicity director at Nuremberg, took charge of the assembly of a vast collection of documents to justify the American case before the world and history. A shorter, but strikingly similar collection of documents, called *Soviet Atomic Espionage* and patently designed to justify the Rosenberg conviction, was prepared under the name of the Joint Committee and was ready for circulation as soon as the verdict was in, so sure were they that the Rosenbergs would be adjudged guilty. Eighty-six of its 222 pages are devoted to selections from the Greenglass confession with not a single line of rebutting testimony from the Rosenbergs.

² One significant objective result of the performance at Nuremberg was its prevention of the exposure of the close working relationship between German big business and American big business, both prior to the war and during and after hostilities. American business had helped bring Hitler to power, and during World War II had collaborated with German industry both in restricting production of a number of strategic war materials with a view toward maintaining monopoly, and in sharing profits. In the fluid period following the end of hostilities and the occupation of Germany an attempt was made to search out the detailed facts of German-American cartelization while the documentary evidence in the form of business records and correspondence was still floating around loose in Germany. The effort, before it got too far, was noiselessly but efficiently quashed. The full and definitive exposure of some highly-placed American war criminals did not come off. (*All Honorable Men*, James Stewart Martin, Boston, 1950.) Thus the Nuremberg Trials seem to have been a diversionary tactic. As for the Russian part in these trials, they were allowed pretty much of a free hand, for their vilification of the German people and their rape of East Germany was useful to American policy at that time.

"trial by newspaper", which the tabloids whipped up to the violence of a lynching party. Second, a brutal and domineering judge, who made no pretence to impartiality, assumed powers far in excess of those established in American law. Judge Kaufman, from the beginning, left no doubt that he presumed the defendants guilty. He assumed the role of prosecutor at will, and shamefully abused and bullied the defendants and the defense. Third, the case was built around the "confession" of Greenglass, which, like the Russian confessions, included incongruous and conflicting, not to say absurd, elements that were not challenged nor sifted in the course of the trial, and were not allowed to be. Fourth, the defense was not only weak and obsequious, but actually shared in a division of labor with the prosecution, on several specific occasions performing chores that would have been awkward for the prosecution to have managed itself. These include the proposal to seal the Greenglass "A-bomb diagrams" as secret, and covering up apparent links between the Government prosecution and O. John Rogge, David Greenglass's lawyer. In nearly two and one-half years of appeals that reached up through appellate channels to the United States Supreme Court the trial was never reviewed — the so-called appeals amounting in effect to a series of hedging maneuvers on peripheral technicalities. During that period when the collections of the Stalinist dominated defense committee mounted vastly — over \$300,000 of which has been publicly admitted — the safeguards of appeal were frittered away and the shadow of the electric chair moved inexorably closer. Only at the very end of the trial, when it was too late, was the charmed circle finally broken by the desperate efforts of two "interloping" attorneys acting on behalf of a "dissolute vagrant". It was on the strength of only one of eleven cogent points raised in the brief presented by Attorneys Fyke Farmer and Dan Marshal on behalf of Irwin Edelman, as "next friend", that Justice Douglas granted his temporary last minute stay of execution. It did not save the Rosenbergs, but it did establish that they might have been saved if the wall of connivance erected around the case by defense attorney Bloch and the Defense committee had been breeched sooner.

In proceeding according to the theory that the Rosenberg case was contrived in the course of the hidden struggle for the control of the atom, it is more significant to uncover the role of top policy groups like the Joint Congressional Committee, the Atomic Energy Commission, and the Supreme Court, than it is to concentrate upon subordinate groups like the FBI and the Communist Party, however fascinatingly devious these latter may be.

With the exception of Mr. Justice Douglas, the Supreme Court, called into extraordinary session by Chief Justice Vinson on 19th June, 1953, to remove the Rosenberg's last hope, must stand indicted before conscience and history as an accessory in their judicial murder. It is even difficult completely to absolve Mr. Justice Douglas, for he is perceptive enough to have had some prior inkling of what was afoot, and should have acted sooner. And Mr. Justice Frankfurter's pathetic post-mortem plea that he did not have time enough to consider the facts, deserves only scorn. Mr. Justice Robert Jackson as Circuit Justice for the judicial division that includes New York, where the case was tried and appealed, must have been thoroughly informed about the case. His opinion rejecting Mr. Justice

Douglas's stay was most disingenuous, particularly his ruse to divert attention from the real issues by insinuations directed against Irwin Edelman.³ Did Jackson's position stem from an understanding he might have had with his former assistant at the Nuremberg Trials and subsequent close associate, Gordon Dean? On 21st May, 1953, one month before the execution, the American Bar Association announced that Jackson had been appointed chairman of a special committee "to direct a nation-wide effort to improve the administration of criminal justice". Dean's name followed Jackson's on the published list of appointees. What unsurpassing irony!

And who advised President Eisenhower to withhold mercy when all the world was memorializing him to spare the unfortunate couple, at least long enough for doubts lately raised properly to be resolved? Admiral Strauss was the President's special advisor on atomic matters. It was the same Admiral Strauss who a few days after the execution, upon reappointment to the AEC, this time as chairman, instituted as one of his first official acts a reopening of the security investigation of his old opponent on the H-bomb, Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer. That very month Dr. Oppenheimer in *Foreign Affairs* proposed that the American people be told the truth about the atomic situation. He proposed "candor". How could the inside clique permit candor with something like the Rosenberg case locked in its closet?

In the past year things have gone from bad to worse. The military has secured its grasp upon the atomic establishment. An adverse decision in the Oppenheimer case marks another step in the intimidation of scientists and their separation from the atomic program. Run-away H-bomb tests in the Pacific have released amounts of atomic poison in the sea and atmosphere that may have permanently harmful effects. A revised Atomic Energy Act about to be pushed through Congress would complete the steal of the peaceful atom by big industry. It was to these ends that the Rosenberg case was framed.

³ Irwin Edelman's pamphlet *Freedom's Electrocution*, published at the end of 1952, first exposed Defense Attorney Bloch's monumental error, and raised the first public doubts as to the competence and good faith of the Rosenberg Defense. In consequence he was expelled from the Los Angeles section of the Defense Committee. Edelman enlisted the aid of Attorney Fyke Farmer of Nashville and Dan Marshal of Los Angeles, and the brief presented by them to Mr. Justice Douglas on behalf of Edelman as "next friend" won the famous stay of execution. Previously Edelman's open-air speeches in Los Angeles's Pershing Park had brought him under persecution by the local police, and he had been jailed under a fantastic local edict as a "dissolute vagrant". Edelman took his case to the Supreme Court for vindication. Mr. Justice Jackson knew perfectly well that Edelman's personal character was quite exemplary.

The S.H.A.P.E. of Things to Come

[General Gruenther, Supreme Commander Allied Powers, Europe, said]:
 " . . . We are now engaged at S.H.A.P.E., at this very moment, in working on a philosophy [!] of war — if, unfortunately, it took place — projected some three years in the future . . . I can tell you some of the highlights of it . . . In our thinking we visualize the use of atomic bombs in the support of our ground troops. We also visualize the use of atomic bombs on targets in enemy territories. . . ." (*Times*, 9th June, 1954.)

Wilhelm Lunen

THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG, or

The Art and Freedom of Interpretation at the Middle of the 20th Century

Preliminary Note 1947*

“THE Ring of the Nibelung” bears the date May, 1944. It thus appears after a long delay but has, in my opinion, lost none of its topicality in three-and-a-half years. It is important for the reader to keep the above date in mind, inasmuch as he will find occasion, now and then, to orient himself by it: So for instance when it is said that “already” the races of the world are swinging back over Channel and Ocean to the Rhine, to win the ring of accursed gold for themselves — a remark aimed at the landing of the Allied armies on the French coast then directly impending. In the same way, the “prediction” that, after “Siegfried’s” dispatch, the “scuffle over possession of the world-dominating ring would not be long in coming”, is to be considered under the date given. This prediction has been confirmed up to the hilt and makes the world still more intimately familiar than before with the final “intervention of the blind will”. I am, however, not “proud” of it: it belongs, if only for myself and my friends, in the category of the obvious.

In a general way, the date shows further that we do not belong to those who have opened only belatedly their only too often, and only too willingly, closed eyes. At that time, the campaign for the “collective guilt” of the Axis peoples (with preference given to Germany) neared the peak of its fury — the preparation of public opinion for what was to follow with the Morgenthau Plan and Potsdam was in full swing. With the end of the war in Europe, an opposition to “collective guilt” gradually formed itself and much water was poured into the once richly flowing wine also by some previous advocates. Now and again, one even finds articles which object to the “psychological nonsense” connected with the guilt question — of course without apprehending the *ideological* significance appertaining to psychology as such in the concept of “collective guilt”. A great deal will yet have to be said about this opposition and its literature, but as far as I can see, it moves entirely on the level of “making allowances”, i.e. it points out that there were “many German anti-fascists”, that the history of all great nations abounds in wars and crimes, that the “democracies” promoted Hitler, etc. All that is correct, important and useful, but insufficient. This study seeks to pose the real problem and, by its solution, also to give political impulses.

* “The Ring of the Nibelung” was first published, at the end of 1947, in our German sister-review “Dinge der Zeit”.

I. Posing of the Question

The "Ring of the Nibelung" has little to do with Richard Wagner and much to do with the intellectual conditions of our time. Wagner's music plays no part at all in it. The word "Ring" serves only as a symbol of the smothering economic, political and ideological system of compulsion which envelops present-day society. What this system is about will be automatically brought out in the course of the investigation, when we encounter the connections of the philosophy and poetry of Richard Wagner with the problems of our time. First a glance must be thrown at certain contemporary conditions and the reasons which provoke special reflections on the "Ring of the Nibelung".

Our time, in consequence of an economic, political and cultural disintegration going on for decades, is distinguished on the one hand by the grossest ignorance, and on the other by the grossest arrogance of a fragmentary sham knowledge. This time stands in philosophical, intellectual and political-moral respects on an incomparably low level. No longer is anything being learned fundamentally and matured organically, but everything is being sniffed at in passing and disposed of with an impertinently "sure" judgment. Critique sees itself thus hindered on all sides: it must "explain" at great length even what is the most simple and obvious, because the average faculty of thinking has sunk to zero point and can be measured only by the extraordinarily "high standard" of coexistent arrogance. In view of contemporary conditions, one can understand the lamenting exclamation of Theodor Lessing: "Upon the occidental earth no gift of unconscious geniality has become so rare as the natural sense of clarity manifesting the fervid activity of discernment".¹

Thus, for example, daily life brings us into contact with an abundant accumulation of legends, brought into the world by specially interested people. These legends refer to the "basic corruption" of the Germans, the role of Germany as the "trouble-maker of the world", the irremediable ideological infection of the German youth, the responsibility of all Germans for the deeds of fascism and all sorts of other ghastly stories. Statesmen, politicians, merchants, literati, philosophers, scientists, newspaper publishers, reporters, poets, union leaders, associations, mere venal rabble (pre-eminently the army of Stalin's agents) . . . they all form a phalanx which is unceasingly active and leaves no hole unfilled in the vast tower of legends. These professional manufacturers of legends aim especially at re-writing, from top to bottom, German history, the biographies of great and minor Germans, etc. They give everything a new meaning, "interpret" everything according to their purpose.

The finished model for such low doings has been supplied by Stalin and his school. Western "civilization" seems to work under the motto: "One must stupefy consciousness and choke every critical ability. One must catch up with and overtake the mammoth work of Stalinist falsification, calumny and poisoning". In any case, there is no doubt: Stalin's seed has been strewn lavishly and sprouts.

Thus, according to the Moscow pattern, attention is focused upon Luther,

¹ The word "genial" is used here and throughout exclusively in its unfortunately neglected meaning "pertaining to genius", there being otherwise no proper equivalent in English.

Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Lassalle, Nietzsche, Marx, Engels, Schopenhauer, Wagner. They are all "precursors of fascism", or at least every known or unknown German is a sadist, a masochist or both at once.

Here now, whoever takes a stand against the deception of the public will have the surprise of his life in Lessing's sense. Already with the first word of reflection he encounters this experience: Everything is found natural and obvious, except that which is natural and obvious.

The Wagner legend may serve as an example *ad hoc* and as a model for the rest. It is a monstrous legend, but as soon as one tackles it and seeks to counter the swindle, one has first of all to "vindicate" oneself. The greater the "educated" impertinence, the further away lies the instinct for the simple fact that natural things require no vindication, or more precisely: that the vindication of a procedure lies always in itself, in its result.

One can, of course, acquire indisputable merit by taking issue with the result, i.e. by demonstrating that it is defective or inferior, that it was obtained by an experiment with an unsuitable object, etc. One can, however, never ask why "at all" Jacques Barzun put a book on the market about "Darwin, Marx and Wagner", or the unspeakable Emil Ludwig his autobiography under the title "Scribblifax of Breslau". Where it is just a matter of finding out which purposes are pursued in a given case, there the folly of the contemporary "artful dodger" is capable of saying with great "obviousness": "Your thoughts are quite correct, but . . . why did you pick out just this subject?"

The over-clever "but" has, naturally, no other purpose but to hide the fact that the critic knows nothing about either correct or incorrect thoughts, but . . . one can always trip him up over his own objections. To castigate the ignorant arrogance which is to be met everywhere in public life is a peremptory requirement for public health. Each slap in its face is an act of revenge for the insults against natural propriety which demands that everybody should take the trouble to become acquainted with the matter before he joins in the discussion.

Naturally there is, under given circumstances, a "fatality" about impudence, lack of manners and ignorance, and they cannot be prevented from cropping up. However, one has to turn energetically against those for whom the fatalistic recognition of certain phenomena does not imply the equally fatalistic fight against them. What is today and even what has been for long, must not always remain so. The outcome is decided by the struggle. It would mean to thoroughly misunderstand the fatalism already in old Greek philosophy, if one were to comprehend it "one-sidedly". For the Greek sages, with the maxim the anti-maxim too was set down. It was by no means beneath their dignity to practise the anti-maxim tangibly. Zeno, teacher of fatalism, took up the whip when he caught a slave stealing. The slave tried to trap Zeno by his own doctrine and claimed that fate had predestined him to steal. "But" thence followed for the Eleatic only that it was just as much the fate of the slave to be whipped for his deed.

It is, therefore, not at all beneath so-called dignity to answer the overbearing critic: The present subject, or the case of Richard Wagner, has been selected because it yields very definite results, and these again in a very definite shape, which would not have been got from another subject. You

may declare yourself uninterested in subject and results, yet this is never an argument — it constitutes solely the case of the diversity of human interests. The absurdity of what you are pleased to use as an argument becomes the more evident, the more it is, on the other hand, wholly unimportant what point of departure one chooses, since one can penetrate to the center from any point. The difference lies only therein that one has, from different positions, always to break through different strata. The real task is the struggle against the enormous narrow-mindedness which, in its "perfection", considers itself as the center. When therefore "arguments" like yours crop up, it will always be shown on closer examination that nothing but impotence hides behind them, which shies from the efforts of thinking, learning, motion, and above all: from the *consequences*.

Generally speaking, the majority considers itself, above all, connoisseur in matters of which it knows scarcely more than the name. More particularly, commodity production, which also dominates the so-called mental sphere, makes it possible, without commercial difficulties, to write the fattest books on themes of which the author has not the slightest understanding.

Amiable as is dilettantism in speaking, writing, philosophizing, music-making, etc., in the private sphere, so damaging is its effect when driven into public life by commodity relations. For, under the conditions of commodity economy, ignorance heightens itself to conscious swindling. Swindling with all its accompanying phenomena arising out of general competition (such as base character, misinterpretation, calumny, falsification, unscrupulousness, vulgarity, shyness to denominate things naturally and to characterize matters exactly) becomes straightaway supreme law. With the expansion of competition, the instincts unleashed by it produce the direct opposite of what the vulgar mind expects. They produce not higher development and "refinement", but mediocrity on a mass scale, the manufacture of trash and sham together with pompous ignorance which rules by "pure" quantity.

It is the same process as with "white" bread which became a mass product on the basis of industrial farming and baking. From the point of view of nutrition, this product of industrial competition is worthless and even harmful. Through ever finer grinding, all nourishing substances are extracted from the cereals until at last only the "white" remains, the "pure" starch, the quantitative worthlessness. In this way, commodity production achieves the paradox of attaining with inferior products, which of course taste sweet as Heine's "Nonnenfürzchen",* higher profits than with superior ones. Secondly, men ruin their physical and spiritual lives in the belief that they nurse them. And thirdly, to boot, the working masses must pay for their ruin in cash, the acquisition of which means to them nothing but unceasing sacrifices of health and joy of living. Marx made the pertinent observation: "In bourgeois society there rules the *factio juris* that every man, as seller of commodities, possesses an encyclopedic knowledge of commodities".

In practice, this statement amounts to: If people knew *what* is being bought and sold and how artificial needs, which a "connoisseur" of commodities could no longer have, are produced in them, then the far bigger part of all commodities would remain unsaleable and bourgeois society

* *Nonnen* are nuns, *Fürzchen* is the diminutive of *Furz* (fart). The name of little cakes.

would explode the next minute. The same holds for the overwhelming majority of all "spiritual" commodities. If people knew with what they are being hopelessly poisoned, then bourgeois society could not exist for another hour. Everything rests upon the juridical fiction that each individual possesses a universal knowledge of commodities, for it is immediately supplemented by the fiction of the individual being *per se* an encyclopedia, an unsurpassable treasure of knowledge and wisdom. Hence, the more the spiritually disinherited readers of today's press (the "communist" press is undoubtedly the most shameful and the dirtiest) fancy themselves to know everything (and this delusion is being deliberately cultivated) the more defenselessly are they delivered into the hands of their tormentors.

To return to the matter under examination: The question "Why, precisely, have you selected old Wagner of all subjects?" appears not merely thoughtless and pompous but simply insipid. For, while in the case of the autobiography of Scribblifax of Breslau we have, after all, only to do with scrap production, Wagner rules the field now as before on the opera stage, in concerts and discussion, to say nothing of his great influence on musical composition. One may dislike Wagner's domination and influence, but dislike is not sufficient to toss off as "old Wagner" a phenomenon which is alive and overwhelming in its vitality. The critic may of course avoid the effort connected with the thorough study of Wagner, Nietzsche, Hegel, etc. On the contrary, he may have his private prejudices, may not want to listen, to read and to exert himself. But then he must remain mute and must forbid himself participation in a public discussion about things which are alien to him.

Proceeding in this manner, the posing of the question concludes with a particularly precise answer for children and old dogs: Dealing with the critic's objections and with contemporary conditions prepares us for the case of Wagner as the overture does for the opera. Is it really necessary to add that the general (the manufacturing of legends on the ground of vested interests) is reflected in the particular and the particular (the case of Wagner) in the general? All the same: The curtain rises for the exposition of the characters.

2. Posing of the question in the light of a concrete example

The "Zeitschrift fuer Sozialforschung" (Journal for Social Research) published a study by T. W. Adorno under the title: "Fragments about Wagner" (No. 1/2, vol. 8, 1939, Librairie Félix Alcan, Paris). True to the conviction that the vindication of an undertaking is to be found in its result, the question naturally did not stand as: "Why 'at all' did Adorno choose the theme Wagner?" One could only say the reverse: "Well, let us see *why* he comes to talk about Wagner and what he brings to light".

Like everything presented so far by the members of the Institute for Social Research, Adorno's study too stood on a high technical level. It assumed, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, an acquaintance on the reader's part with an array of philosophical questions, with systems of philosophy, with poets, with artistic, historical and technical problems of music, etc., without the knowledge of which the whole thing cannot fully be understood, still less checked. This stated, it must be said at once, in view of the backwardness and indolence which marks our epoch: Every-

one, including T. W. Adorno, has the right to assume, in the sense of Feuerbach, "Spirit also in the reader", i.e. knowledge. The conditions under which we live are, for the most part, not created by us. In particular the regrettable split of society into a small band of "specialists" on the one hand and the mass of the ignorant on the other, is a result of the social division of labor which simply cannot be altered by complaints.

What attitude private persons, political parties, groups shaped in conformity with specific interests, etc., adopt towards the product of the specialists, is immaterial. But since these specialists lead society by the nose in every sphere of social activity and since they themselves work exclusively according to the laws of competition, the whole of society remains in "spiritual" respects too the slave of the most universal and most vulgar competition. As in the economic and political fields, so even in the "most august" spheres of philosophy, science, art, etc., only a few know whether they are served with useful results or sham production, error, charlatany and outright fraud. General competition is, incidentally, the reason why, on the one hand, so many artistic, scientific, philosophic, religious and political tendencies or schools exist, and why, on the other, they so furiously fight each other, go bankrupt, unite with and against each other, as is the case in the life of states, industries, commercial firms, insurance agencies and small shopkeepers. Obviously competition produces, besides cheap and adulterated trash, also grandiose progress. Such progress, however, is applied in the same way as the discovery of dynamite or the conquest of the air by aviation. They become weapons with which one extends competition and beats down the opponent.

To destroy the tyranny of specialists, there is thus only one means: One must oppose them with their own weapons, i.e. make specialism a general phenomenon by multiplying its representatives and thus dissolving it as a particular stratum. The greater the number of people who dispose of sufficient knowledge and thus are in a position to control the tyrants determining their education and opinions, the more the professional specialist disappears and makes room for the really educated human being.² Thus the obvious consists here in taking things as they are and trying to cope with them.

In the case of Adorno it soon became apparent that he too (despite the high technical level) belonged to the manufacturers of legends and was filled with a strangely petty hatred against his subject. This hatred, in turn, would have been the most obvious thing in the world or a completely unproblematic phenomenon had it enabled Adorno to "finish off" the real Wagner and his work in strict objectivity. Instead of that, there spoke a

² Parties bent upon "changing the world" who renounce becoming specialists in every conceivable way themselves and destroying competition in the general interest, doom themselves from the beginning to the frightful provincialism of small shopkeepers fighting each other which characterizes the "revolutionary" organizations of to-day without exception. If ever one of these organizations in its present condition came to power, it would be bound to lose it again simply because it would be entirely at the mercy of the specialists who would lead it into certain catastrophe. This does not apply to the followers of Stalin, who are simply paid swindlers and have other tasks than to advance mankind. It has also nothing to do with the disconsolate creations which call themselves Social-Democratic parties, but rather with those organizations which, seen in the abstract, have better foundations, but go about their task in a ridiculously limited manner.

man who pretended to "hate" the "existing", but who had installed himself in the midst of it and now furiously attacked the "mischief-maker" Wagner (which will have to be shown). In doing so he used a means which is appreciated and applied only by petit-bourgeois posing as radicals; petit-bourgeois, that is, who need to deceive themselves and others as to their position. This means is called modern psychology, an alleged science which is a colossal fraud and until today has remained without *principled* opposition.

The fruits of modern psychology will present themselves at the proper time. At this point it is sufficient to note that our noble "science" prepares legends specifically for the circle of its victims who lack the capacity for checking them, legends which present-day society urgently needs in order to veil its true character. In the end, it supplies nothing more than that which is produced, on a correspondingly lower level and for the daily agitation, by creatures like Emil Ludwig. It would indeed be an enormous mistake to believe that science has nothing to do with the demagogic exigencies of the time. In reality, a significant percentage of specialists is occupied with preserving the illusions about the bourgeois order. Only after these illusions have been entrenched in all spheres and sufficiently buttressed, can the coarse Emil Ludwigs hope to succeed in their work of falsification. The popular prejudice is built up after the pattern: If even "pure" science gravely shakes its head, there must be something in the rantings of the often "exaggerating" Mr. Emil Ludwig who, in other respects, is an unpleasant fellow.

3. Details of T. W. Adorno's presentation

The peculiar colouring which T. W. Adorno gives to everything that has to do with Richard Wagner, falls back upon Adorno from the start. For example:

" 'Rienzi' not only became Wagner's first big success, which brought him name and position, but still to-day noisily fills the opera houses, although the Meyerbeerian attitude of the grand opera contradicts Wagner's own norms of the music-drama as thoroughly as the 'Novice of Palermo'. The opening scene, to be sure, no longer glorifies free sensuality. It denounces it. A gang of young noblemen are on the point of executing an assault on the virtue of the chaste Irene. She is the blindly devoted sister of Rienzi, the last Roman tribune and the first bourgeois terrorist".

To characterize Adorno's method: The Meyerbeerian attitude of the grand opera, which in "Rienzi" contradicts Wagner's own norms of the music-drama, is a defamatory flourish without sense or content. The public may enjoy itself equally at the grand opera, the German song-play, the chamber opera, the music-drama, etc., but what has that to do with Wagner's later "norms"? The only thing one can say with some sense is not "although" but: Wagner continued his development, gave up grand opera, and occupied himself with the "drama of the future".

This unimportant flourish must be chalked up against Adorno because it follows immediately upon the statement, also defamatory in intent and factually indefensible, that still to-day "Rienzi" noisily fills the opera "houses". Anyone can, by referring to the playbills, convince himself easily that performances of "Rienzi" (the last of the tribunes and Adorno's first

conveyor belt) are approximately as frequent as two-headed cows. One sees that Adorno, right from the beginning, is eager to suggest Wagner's alleged enthusiasm for "bourgeois terror" and terrorists and the "success" he had with it among the public. He does not make the slightest effort to explain that there is simultaneously, notwithstanding certain similarities of contemporary dictatorships with the early bourgeois terrorists, a tremendous difference. At all times, the political pacemakers of the bourgeoisie — whether Luther, Calvin, Cromwell, Danton, Robespierre, Napoleon, Louis Bonaparte, Bismarck or others — have been dictators and terrorists. A learned man like Adorno ought to know that it is pure demagoguery and amounts to underpinning the contemporary need for lies if one employs false accents and, in an historical investigation, is silent about the respects in which the revolutionary dictatorship of, e.g. a Cromwell, differs from the counter-revolutionary dictatorship and terrorism of a Hitler. Historically it is just "Rienzi" which can be interpreted only on the basis of the conditions characteristic for Germany on the eve of her *positively* oriented and unconditionally progressive *bourgeois* revolution.

Here generalizations might have been made which would stand diametrically opposed to the demagogic generalizations of Adorno. Thus he might have used the example of "Rienzi" to say, like Marx, about the bourgeois revolutionary-minded artist Wagner:

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something entirely new, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle slogans and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honored disguise and this borrowed language. Thus Luther donned the mask of the Apostle Paul, the Revolution of 1789 to 1814 draped itself alternatively as the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, the Revolution of 1848 knew nothing better to do than to parody, in turn, 1789 and the revolutionary tradition of 1793 to 1795."

Wagner, too, has borrowed names, slogans and costumes of the past in order to give expression to his revolutionary moods and ideas concerning art and politics. And therein lies the reason why he could not escape the general laws of the bourgeois revolution as a *minority revolution*.

The law of all revolutions in which one ruling minority is removed and replaced by another minority, consists in its appearing as a "people's revolution". "Fully conscious" of its historic mission, the minority comes forward in the name of general aims and as the representative of the people, and to give the movement of the minority the appearance of a majority movement, it already suffices that the mass of the people take a passive attitude towards it. Most minority revolutions, however, are distinguished by the fact that they have the support of the masses and bring to power a more radical wing which pushes the revolution sufficiently far on. When this wing with its "dictator" has sufficiently secured the historically necessary changes by exaggerations, then it usually, like Robespierre or

Rienzi, loses its own head, that is, it is removed and disappears, together with its exaggerations, in the abyss of history.

On such solidified social ground, investigation and criticism of social research might have begun with hope for a good result. It might perhaps have compared the character of Rienzi's Roman uprising directed against the "libertine" style of life with the dictatorship of the "virtuous" Robespierre and might have found out why both terrorists, together with the "ascetic" feature, have in common a leaning towards solemn arrangements or towards "cult". It could, under certain conditions, have rightly said that Wagner had "an inkling of the fickleness of bourgeois terror, of the forlornness of self-appointed heroism". In which case one would have to admire the penetration with which Wagner represented Rienzi, in essence, just like Napoleon, who took the Caesarean crown out of the hands of the Pope and placed it himself on his head, to be buried later under the ruins of his magnificence. It would then really have been possible to find out why Wagner had to leave the grand opera to Meyerbeer, Halévy, Gounod, had to develop away from it and to treat it with hatred and contempt.

For Germany was not so lucky as France. It entered bourgeois development as the famous late-comer: in its miserable bourgeois revolution, the coming catastrophe of all existing society already announced itself. The genius Wagner saw here no more room for individual tragedy and strove towards the drama of society. Wagner's "Gesamtkunstwerk" has the meaning of reflecting the collective drama of society. As a work of art, it therefore shares the problematic character of that society, but in its universality lies, on the other hand, the secret of its attractive power.

Adorno's social research, however, sets no store in tracing the interconnections which have become visible to-day. It produces instead the connections with the rabble who see a prelude to Hitler in everything that has lived and in all that has happened in Germany, always excepting, of course, the case of the individual speaking or writing in that strain.³ Adorno does not consider for a second that the rise of a society is something different from its decline. Still less does he consider that all bourgeois

³ At this point there shall be eliminated an objection which sounds: "Why deal with Adorno whose treatise is already several years old and known only to a very narrow circle?" This objection reveals once more the thoughtless self-defense which would like to talk off the earth the fact that Adorno's method and argumentation are *typical* and are cultivated in numerous schools of which not the least is the "Institute for Social Research" itself. The task is quite simply to unmask this method and manner of argumentation and to hit at "pure" science without which the rabble could not exist. — It may at this time (May, 1953) be added that an enlarged edition (in book-form) of Adorno's *Fragments* has appeared in Germany under the title "Versuch über Wagner" (Suhrkamp Verlag, 1952). In a note to his book Adorno declares that his "Fragments on Wagner" had their "modest fate: an extensive polemic appeared in 'Dinge der Zeit', London. It came only after years into the hands of the author, when it was far too late for a reply. Still he believed that the text of the chapters already printed should essentially [!] remain the same". — Well, the author of the "Ring" knows for sure that already in 1948 at least one *prominent* member of the Institute for Social Research had *read* and *approved* the "Ring". But what is more important: Why should it be too late for a *reply* when it is not too late for republishing the *attacked text*? Adorno's statement reads rather like an "objectively" masqueraded attempt to evade a controversy in which many are interested for the sake of knowledge, truth and — justice. "Dinge der Zeit" and "Contemporary Issues" will publish *any answer* Adorno wants to write, but they will treat with disdain excuses which are none.

revolutions are pregnant to bursting-point with "people's community" (Volksgemeinschaft), with freedom, equality, fraternity and similar phrases. Unconcernedly he leaves aside everything historic and angrily attacks once more that which is just the obvious. In the style of the gossip columnist he "brands" on Rienzi the proclamation of "people's community" common to all bourgeois revolutions and fires away:

"In this people's community, the subjugated are taken in only titularly" [as if this were not so with every bourgeois constitution and code of law!]
 "Now then Rome I make great and free, I will awake it from its slumber, and those whom you see in the dust I make free citizens of Rome'. As the 'hero of peace' gives the feudalists to understand that he does not intend to do them any serious harm, so he limits the claims of the subjugated merely to their consciousness: ' . . . to help those with base feelings, to raise those reduced to dust, you have transformed the people's shame to greatness, fame and majesty . . . ' "

Seen historically or as "social research" and not psychologically and morally, this is just what had to be done, no matter in what guise, by the bourgeoisie in Wagner's time.

To use a metaphor: the charge cannot be directed against people who, at a time when the child was still growing in the mother's womb, declared that mother and child form an organic "community". The deception about the antagonism between mother and child, which later fully develops, and the conscious fraud begin only when the child has attained independence of the mother and quacks are trying to press it back into her womb.

Thus it was not Wagner who found himself in the role of the swindling proponent of people's community, but those who betrayed the subjugated at the time of their full independence to the bourgeoisie (a betrayal all the more horrible and base since it was committed not in the name of bourgeois "freedom", but in the name of the suppressed themselves). The *real* precursors of Hitler are therefore to be found not among the midwives of bourgeois society but among those who delivered the subjugated defenselessly to Hitler. These were in the first instance "Communists" and Social Democrats. The "Communists" carried on their business of mass murder on the order of Stalin, the bloodiest, most generally dangerous and most reactionary terrorist the earth has ever seen. Social Democracy helped, took over from the bourgeoisie the fraud of "people's community" which had become historically impossible, and made of it a "theoretical" system (economic democracy, "organized capitalism", etc.). The German reaction could never have succeeded in doing what Stalin's henchmen achieved in the name of the Russian "socialist" and the Social Democrats in the name of the "democratic" *people's community*. It was only the united efforts of these indeed merely hostile brothers which drove the German masses into a blind alley, into apathy, despair, helplessness and irresolution.

It was no accident that these same people invented the "popular front" after the catastrophe in Germany. They pressed the people into *parliamentary* community with its enemies (reduction of the people's demands to treacherous prattle) kept it away from every policy of its own and cheated it out of the fruits of its struggles. Against these people alone the indignant charge can be flung with sense and reason that they assumed the role of people's tribunes, accepted the subjugated only "titularly" into their people's

community and limited the demands of the subjugated "to their mere consciousness".

It requires much moral crookedness to leap at the historic Wagner and his historic "spectacle" while one plays Institute for Social Research and advocates a highly critical, that is to say, a highly clever policy of people's community. The ideological expression of people's community is best furnished there by the representative of the new pseudo-science "mass psychology". Meant is Mr. Erich Fromm, who puts as a motto to his book "Escape from Freedom" one of the fundamental theses of petit-bourgeois people's community and thereby propounds naked government propaganda. The thesis about which the whole psychological humbug rotates is Thomas Jefferson's statement: "Nothing then is unchangeable but the inherent and inalienable rights of man".

Unfortunately these "inherent and inalienable rights of man", unchangeable as they may be in contrast to other commercial articles of the literary stock exchange, are peculiar things. Apart from speeches and books of petit-bourgeois ideologists they are nowhere to be had, therefore they are particularly suited to the "science" of people's community. And so the psychologizing criticism only unmasks itself when Adorno tries to "brand" Wagner:

"There is early indicated in him a change of function of the bourgeois category of the individual. It tries to avoid its annihilation in the hopeless conflict with the social authority by taking sides with it and rationalizing just this transition as its real individual development".

"Just" this accusation turns against the whole Institute for Social Research whose background is the Washington government. In the hopeless conflict (hopeless for the psychologists) with the social authority, it has taken sides with this authority. Thereby the "critical" attitude transformed itself into "democratic" recipes which were "rationalized as its real individual development" and were nothing more than a masquerade for the mentioned treacherous transition. There exists, however, a great difference between Wagner and Adorno. Wagner stands in a specific historical framework and *exhausted the possibilities he had*. Adorno, in contrast, lives in an epoch which in truth has arrived at the real consequences of Wagner's work and opens altogether different possibilities. Adorno now evades these new possibilities (and that means only *necessities*) and, in so doing, is chiefly concerned with shirking the consequences of Wagner's work. Herein alone lies the secret of Adorno's criticism of Wagner. It is filled with spiteful vengeance against the one who sentenced the half-heartedness and narrow-mindedness of the "Center" (of the Adornos) to historic doom and whose prophetic vision grates on the nerves of this petit-bourgeois center, because it brands them as traitors from the beginning. This is why the crux of the Wagner question is being timidly circumvented and buried under a great mass of crooked, distorted, arbitrarily treated details.⁴ The details themselves serve psychological criticism not for clarification of the interconnections, but rather for vindication of its own treachery, "rationalized" as

⁴ Due to lack of space it is impossible to consider the bulk of these often grotesque details one by one. One can, however, hope for opposition which would give an opportunity to return to the matter. (See foregoing footnote: Adorno is again invited to disprove the assertions made here.)

criticism. Such criticism must defame Wagner's total work, in order to be able to escape its conclusion. Only thus can Adorno's fury be explained when occasionally he blunders upon the crux of the Wagner question and must try to talk it out of the world at any price. For example:

"The conflict between rebellion and society is pre-decided in favor of society. Finally in the 'Ring' the supremacy of society over the opposition and the latter's functioning for bourgeois purposes are transfigured into transcendental fate. Such transfiguration alienates the world historic allegory from real history".

As if the allegory had anything at all to do with "real" history and were not just an . . . allegory, in which symbolic splendor and "transfiguration" are obvious as artistic, ideological or other trimmings and can alter nothing in the matter. Incidentally, Adorno already here refutes himself in a droll fashion when he calls upon Carl F. Glasenapp as a witness who says about the allegory:

"He (Wagner) intended to exhibit in it only the hitherto existing historical phase of world development in its necessary doom, but in Siegfried the man of the future as he wanted him, fearlessly happy; and then he noticed how, in the execution, basically already in mapping out his plan, he had followed unconsciously an altogether different, much deeper, conception. Not a single phase of world development, but the essence of the world itself, in all its conceivable phases, he had perceived in his poetical composition and apprehended in its nothingness".

Adorno himself will later help us to clear up why Glasenapp renders the symbolical significance of "The Ring" in too limited a fashion and why Wagner's radicalism drives him beyond the necessary doom. Meanwhile, the pre-decision of the conflict between rebellion and society "in favor of" society proves to be untenable and the opposition "functions" in Wagner's work by no means for "bourgeois purposes", but only as the instrument of doom (which, however, may be "interpreted" to be a bourgeois *end in itself*). Adorno is unable to get his teeth into Wagner's conclusion and to admit: it is the highest conclusion at which a bourgeois can arrive. He does not tell himself that this conclusion has already become a grim reality and is absolutely unavoidable as long as the hitherto existing phase of world development is not overcome. Instead of bringing in any historical or objective points of view at all, he answers with aphorisms:

"It is the text-book case of what Lucàs once called 'flattening by depth': through the leveling to the generally human and its 'nothingness' the essence behind the 'appearance', namely the law of motion of society, is missed and the distress of the historic period is hypostatized as a world principle".

Flattening by depth could be a witty aphorism, if it were not identical with talking the world to pieces by psychology. Unfortunately there has never been an historical "period" without distress. The deepest philosophy is therefore undoubtedly that which states distress, at least in society and in organic life, as the ultimate law of motion. Adorno fails to prove *where*, through leveling to the generally human and its nothingness, the essence behind the appearance has been *missed*. In addition: the essence must *appear* (Hegel) and in it everything special is in fact leveled and reduced to its nothingness as long as the law of motion itself only confirms the

nothingness of the human. Our investigation will show in the proper place that Wagner was not in need of any psychological artifices in order to escape from the law of motion of society. On the contrary, he seizes this law firmly by the throat and proves his "depth" by the nothingness of a present which he genially forbode. The fact of the necessary doom Adorno could not talk out of the world, even if he could indicate a way out where psychology only whirls madly in a circle as follows:

"Yet this distress, as a concretely historical one, shapes only too thoroughly the carriers of rebellion in the 'Ring'. The opponents of the existing order are isolated individuals, destitute of every genuine compassion and, moreover, of every solidarity: Siegfried, the man of the future, is a rowdy of obdurate naïveté, imperialistic through and through, at most with the doubtful advantage of grand-bourgeois unconstraint over petit-bourgeois narrow-mindedness".

Adorno himself may decide whether a rowdy of obdurate naïveté too does not, in spite of all doubtful advantages, only represent petit-bourgeois narrow-mindedness. But it seems an established fact that distress, even if hypostatized as a "world-principle", cannot manifest itself otherwise than as "a concretely historical one", whereby Adorno establishes himself as one who jemmies open-doors. On the other hand it remains uncertain whether Wotan's compassion for Siegmund, Siegmund's compassion for Sieglinde, her compassion for Siegmund and so on is "genuine" or not, because it needs a psychologist to decide that. What, however, is certain is the full solidarity among Siegmund, Sieglinde, Wotan and Brünnhilde, which asserts itself just there where Wotan is compelled to act against his own will and to leave his "rebellious protégé" in the lurch.

Adorno arranges the matter according to his needs and accuses the "sovereign God" of this last misdeed whereas the real conflict in Wagner is based on the law of motion of society which *strips* the god of all "sovereignty" and subjects him to the will of Fricka as the representative of the existing order. Where the solidarity between Brünnhilde and Siegmund is striking and both hold out to the end in rebellion against Wotan (in reality Fricka) with the subsequent saving of Sieglinde by Brünnhilde, there Adorno interpolates his Siegfried "imperialistic through and through" as proof of missing solidarity. And in this consists the trick of psychological criticism defending itself while standing completely in the service of . . . "democratic" imperialism. This criticism is particularly keen on accusations like imperialistic, treachery, "terroristic", etc., but it has great difficulty in ridding itself of Wagner's compact superiority. With what prophecy Wagner invested, for instance, Siegfried's "imperialism", Adorno himself shows best:

"Wagner's betrayal of the revolution is a piece of the revolution itself. Paradoxically enough, it is just the pessimism of 'The Ring' which contains traces of criticism of bourgeois revolution, by unwillingly confessing that the rebellion of the child of nature [Siegfried] leads once more into the entanglement with the indigenous system; a wisdom which the present-day followers of Wagner and his type of 'elevation' would hear with dismay, if the surging orchestra of the Goetterdaemmerung would still let it through at all".

To begin with, Adorno presents as "paradoxical" that which, given the

necessary doom of the nothingness, is only a new self-evidence. Adorno thus again confesses "unwillingly" that Wagner, with the entanglement of the indigenous system, does not miss the law of motion of society, but makes it the axis of his whole drama, ergo — that he himself arrives, anything but "unwillingly", at the wisdom of his judgment on hopeless imperialism. Adorno cannot eliminate this wisdom and, in order to pass it off as "unimportant" for Wagner's followers and for the whole world, he pushes the orchestra before it which apparently only for him still "lets through" such wisdom. Let us, however, take as a Wagnerian type of "elevation" Mr. Hitler personally, who cultivates Wagner and accepts the entanglement completely, up to the doom. So considered, it has often happened before that a pathologically criminal person played the organ after every murder or went to bed in a white funeral shroud, thus celebrating with the submission to the compulsion to commit crimes also the submission to the last judgment.

Like every other seer, Wagner could anticipate only the general trends of the movement, not the features of persons or the concrete circumstances. He has nothing to do with the details of the gruesome twilight of the Gods in the historic reality of our day. But what sense has the reference to the surging orchestra of the Goetterdaemmerung at all, if Wagner's intentions become more than clear by the course of the action and Siegfried's death? Does it not aim to mislead even those who hold the libretto in their hands? According to Adorno himself, the final version of the "Ring" leads to the "desperate intelligence that he (Siegfried), in order to be more than only a victim and servant of the existing, and nevertheless unable to reverse the existing from which he emanates and into which Wagner's resignation calls him home, effects with his own annihilation, and that of individuation, simultaneously that of the whole" (which "to be *more* than only a victim and servant of the existing" again throws a strange side-light on the above asserted "functioning of the opposition for bourgeois purposes").

In another place, Adorno says: "In Wagner, the bourgeois class dreams of its own doom as its sole salvation yet without perceiving of salvation more than only the doom".

That is not a bad description of what is being experienced now: it is plain that Hitler with his own annihilation and that of individuation effects at the same time that of the whole. However, it is not Wagner's "resignation" that calls the infatuated Hitler home into the existing which has seemingly lifted him above itself. Reversely, it is only the law of motion of bourgeois society, a society which of itself can find no way out of its entanglement. For one must not forget: Hitler appears as the illegitimate and the "disinherited" true son of the Gods who rule the bourgeois world, just as Siegfried is the illegitimate (begot of a common mortal woman) and disinherited grandson of Wotan. Both the disinherited (as mere executors of the historic destiny also spiritually disinherited, of obdurate naïveté and petit-bourgeois narrow-mindedness) seemed appointed by fate to represent the "new order", to negate the old law and to become the "ruler of the world". Precisely here, in accordance with the law of motion of bourgeois society, comes to pass Wagner's verdict: Impossible! You are only material in the hands of the Gods who have no other way out than by your doom

to get rid also of their own existence which has become unendurable.

Insofar as Wagner "resigns", he formulates but the law of bourgeois society, that society which can only by its annihilation also be freed from its stupidity and be led beyond itself. That is why it is a great mistake to take Siegfried even in the least for the allegoric representative of the "proletarian" class, as Adorno wishes:

" . . . only in those exempt from the mythical tie of contracts and property, in the ignorant, can the idea of world history which passes judgment on this history realize itself. 'Not soil and serfs I offer, nor father's house and hall: all I am heir to is my body, living I use it up'. The romantically sounding notion of the proletariat, which assigns to it the 'rescuing deed' because it is supposed to stand outside of the societal guilt-connection, and which suppresses the dependence of the proletariat on the mechanism of society . . . "

Nothing can be more false than to substitute the proletariat where, in the allegory, the disinherited petit-bourgeois stands as Wotan's own offspring, who living has only to consume his own body (a matter of Hitler's pride). Further investigation will also make clear that the alleged exception of Siegfried from the "societal guilt-connection" is precisely that crafty self-deception of Wotan which he confesses in his dialogue with Brünnhilde, and which Fricka prevents him from carrying out in the first round of their struggle. Nevertheless, the dependence on the mechanism of society retains its full validity. Brünnhilde only carries out the deeper will of Wotan, when she first protects Siegmund and then saves Sieglinde, i.e. Siegfried. Later Wotan puts into Siegfried's hands the same weapon which, *according to his plan*, would have already meant only a different ruin for Siegmund. But this solely completes the self deception: It is just the impossibility of escaping from the dependence on the mechanism of society which finally leads Wagner to the "desperate intelligence": What "rises from the existing" must also sink with it. Adorno is incapable of keeping his statements together, but Wagner had no need at all to transform only *post festum* the allegoric representative of the "proletariat" into an "individual". From the start, Siegfried is born as an individual (in the sense of the petit-bourgeois fiction). If the proletariat is represented at all in the allegory, then it is only in the nameless Nibelung hordes over whom Wotan rules "not through contracts" but through the power of his spear.

Thus Adorno simply does not know what he is doing when he says: "Siegfried, once placed in the role of the immediate human, no longer remains the allegoric representative of the class; he becomes an 'individual' who alone represents for Wagner the immediate and natural human. The revolutionary transforms himself into the rebel".

The truth, in contradistinction to this intrinsically flowery cant is this: Wagner needs the "proletariat" only in so far as it participates in the historical enacting of the *Goetterdaemmerung*. As soon as the latter is executed it steps back into vague obscurity. For the rest, Wagner wanders through the circle of bourgeois possibilities, exhausts them, and lets the doom of bourgeois society be brought about *by itself*. In that way he refutes the fiction of the petit-bourgeois individual who is never a "revolutionary" but always only a rebel within the narrow limits drawn for him by the predetermined circle of the bourgeois possibilities. Adorno's

constructions and various "interpretations" become more untenable with each additional step. At another point, he says:

"There is no way out from the infatuation-context of society as long as private property is retained; in the sign of private property, subjective lust — Love — and the objectively organized reproduction of societal life are irreconcilable. 'Power', Wagner's antagonistic principle to love, is in the Rheingold nothing more than the power to dispose of the labor of others, though with the nuance of casting defamation upon 'rapacious' capital alone".⁵

This only accentuates the question of where, in the Rheingold, the events of which occur long before the conception of Siegmund and Siegfried, the power to dispose of the labor of others can find a "proletariat". Wherever one places it (with the giants or with the Nibelungs), Adorno will not succeed in transferring from there the notion of the proletariat to Siegfried, the unfettered child of nature. Wagner was indeed the only "romanticist" who led all that is bourgeois to its end and thereby opened the way into the future. That is why as long as the petit-bourgeoisie (the bourgeoisie considers this class only as its tool) could still only "dream" of its doom, its ideologists acclaimed Wagner and modified Siegfried's rebelliousness (which to them was the revolution itself) into "salvation through doom" without end. As soon as it became evident, however, that all rebellion within the bourgeois framework could only *throw into relief* the actual doom, the high-flying intoxication changed into a hangover which perceived nothing but "only the doom".

While the mass must mutely accept destiny, the hate of the "rebels" is now directed against the one who had given them, early enough, a prognosis. It was only necessary to take this prognosis as seriously and as consistently as Wagner himself in order to step out of the entanglement of rebellion into the real revolution by force of the fact that a law which has been defined loses its power. But missed opportunities only create redoubled hatred, more blind urge for self-vindication, more entangled "rebelliousness". The hatred of the ideologists against the one who rose from among them as executor of the testament of all rebellion and who is flesh of their own flesh (Hitler), turns back upon Wagner. The rebels do not hold themselves responsible for Hitler, they execrate "only" doom as the work of the one who was able to compress his own bourgeois contradictions into the colossal work of his allegory and presented it to bourgeois society as a warning image. This constitutes the mystery of the campaign against Wagner. Its pivot is the endeavor to annihilate that revolutionary side which romantic art formed once in Wagner's neo-romanticism and in it alone.

In the shadow of this campaign, the mystery of modern psychology too is revealed and its function as a secret self-defense against a guilt with which one burdens others. The case of "Rienzi", with which this section was introduced, already represents a brilliant psychological achievement. Before passing to broader examination: Adorno had asserted that Wagner,

⁵ With the defamation of "rapacious" capital, of course, only the defamation of Wagner is intended. But Adorno would do better to direct this, for example, to Rudolph Hilferding who had prepared just this "nuance" in a "scientific" model for Hitler's use. As has been said before: there exists *direct* connection.

in "Rienzi", no longer glorified "free sensuality", but rather *denounced* it. Evidence: "A gang of young noblemen are on the point of executing an assault on the virtue of the chaste Irene".

That is the acme of psychology at its highest level of perfection: the so-to-speak soul organism of the psychologist himself. For he must suffer from a severe defect (moderately stated) and must have a quite desolate conception of "free sensuality" to be able to present "an assault" on a girl as "denunciation" of "free" sensuality. Consequently one should warn strongly against such a conception, regardless whether the victim is the virtuous Irene or a wanton whore. Psychologists capable of such assaults on free sensuality must be viewed as a public menace. Point of view for the defense: Hatred against a superior leads to frenzy.

4. Notes on historical foundations for an appraisal of Wagner

It would lead too far astray to show with what intentions Wagner began the so-called glorification of Germanism and where it led him. Wagner is not the first nor the last artist who was overwhelmed by his material and found more in it than he had expected. The "glorification of Germanism" is only the first reproach generally leveled at him and may thus serve as a starting point.

Whoever does not want to be an ignorant babbler, a dilettante, emotionally determined, a demagogue without conscience, or simply a fraud, will first of all look for solid foundations and will ask himself: how do things stand?

The mere posing of this question then leads him to the re-establishment of historical truth which has become so widely outmoded and which, in the moral sphere, is called elemental justice. A fascist can concoct as many lies as he wishes. A democrat, however, who violates a principle of elementary democracy is an idiot or a scoundrel. Granted for once, without any differentiations and nuances, Wagner's nationalism, glorification of Germanism, etc., as given, things nevertheless stand thus:

One cannot reproach Wagner who, both as a participant in the Dresden uprising and as "one who returned to grace", was a *bourgeois*, of having *been* a bourgeois. Just as little can one reproach any bourgeois with nationalism and glorification of his own people "as such". National pride, even chauvinist arrogance and exclusiveness, are properties which belong "naturally" to the inhabitants of the young national states. Countless bourgeois of a given country share these properties with countless bourgeois of all other countries.*

The question is now whether one will behave like a petit-bourgeois anarchist, reproach the wolf for having a wolf's nature and condemn nationalism "as such" bag and baggage. As long as the anarchist really turns against *all* wolves, he remains indeed a helpless petit-bourgeois but is at least a morally clean person.

One can, on the other hand, behave like a thinking person and understand that nationalism (including its weaknesses which are bourgeois from the

*The designation for the typical depravation of the natural bourgeois national sentiment does not, incidentally, go back to a German but to the French model, Chauvin. There is not one great capitalist country on earth which has not, up to this moment, produced the most repugnant chauvinists. Whoever does not always let this truth shine through, acts as a partisan of chauvinism.

beginning) was historically necessary and unavoidable and has indeed, where it appears without bourgeois weaknesses and degenerations, not yet played out its role. Except, therefore, where a nation really is still or once again suppressed, a thinking person and honest fellow will oppose *bourgeois nationalism* which is at the end of its historical mission and openly bears the sign of degeneration upon its forehead. In every case, the honest fellow must be resolute to fight nationalism wherever he meets it. He must not limit himself to the author of the song "Deutschland über Alles" for whom this poem had a meaning as different from Hitler's interpretation as the expression "La grande Nation" is something other when used by a French bourgeois revolutionary than when used by a chauvinist.

Accordingly, historic truth, differentiations and nuances must always be presupposed. Supposing Wagner (who died when the swindle of the Gruenderjahre¹ reached its full swing) were to be burdened with all the sins of the bourgeois nationalist mentality. Nevertheless: more repugnant than he would be a German social-democrat who, among a thousand other misdeeds, had squeezed out of the German people a series of pocket battle-ships, the sinking of which by the formerly denounced "villainous Versailles", he now frantically acclaims.

The depth of a guilt can be measured only from the point at which the perpetrator formerly stood. The higher the historic level, the greater the possibility of social progress, the deeper is the fall, the more wretched the treacherous deed. What an artist, a politician, a party and so on were in reality is not to be found in spoken words aside from work and action. It is often not even to be found in single works and actions but in the total work, in the action *decisive* for the whole. Even the "noblest" must fight for self-preservation, must err and develop himself by his errors. When it thus comes to the *total achievement* of the *official* artistic, literary, religious, ideological, political and other German leadership (the "Communist" leadership above all), it is found in its ultimate product: fascism. Whoever, in any form, tries to take the responsibility for this fruit off the shoulders of that generation of leaders *which confronted fascism during their lifetime*, and tries to shift it on to history, the German people, the preceding generations of leaders, etc., is a fraud.

Germany's political history in the narrower sense, the history of its ruling classes and governments may be (to the special advantage of British imperialism) the richest on earth in mediocrities. And yet the world owes to the very narrowness, pettiness, wretchedness and *impossibility* of German conditions an array of great spiritual and artistic exploits such as no other country has to show. There, great distress has forced into height what could not go into breadth. For this, the German people is to be neither praised nor blamed. It has undergone its great men, it has lived historically only through them and has itself remained featureless, formless and without history.

Those juicy round individuals, those figures of strong character, those penetrating political deeds (truly "epoch-making" ones, with which, for instance, French history abounds) are extremely rare in Germany: timid attempts rather than untameable resolution, latent potency rather than

¹ The founding years of German industry initiated with the war indemnities exacted from France following the Franco-Prussian War of 1871.

immediate reality. The "great man" appears in Germany, now as half or totally insane, now as child, crank, hermit or Don Quixote, now as rebel and weak character, now (as Marx said of Goethe) colossal and now philistine-small. Almost without exception his *personality* is corroded by the dichotomy, ambiguity, corruption and untenability of German conditions. They prevent him from solving the questions of the day and force him to turn to the solution of "eternal" problems.

Not that ambiguities and so on would not be found elsewhere. They are elsewhere only held in check; they are prevented by a series of single acts from gaining the preponderance characteristic for Germany. Emil Zola, for the "psychological" mode of consideration a philistine liable to vicious analysis, as artist and thinker of third rank, appears as an integral man on the political stage where Goethe steps with bowed back into the society of princes. Where England creates a world empire with tenacious brutality and knows how to keep it for a long time, the German bee-like industriousness leads from one national catastrophe to another.

Yet Germany is only a special case of a disease which is intrinsic to the blood stream of the economic system of the *world* and which makes the whole world from day to day *more resemble Germany*. For this reason, the "great" men of Germany saw earlier than others the day arrive when even the mightiest "single act" could no longer save existing society. Not by accident were Marx and Engels Germans. Only the spade work accomplished in Germany put them in a position to tackle the "eternal" problem in terms of their time.

The same conditions which had formed Germany's national misfortune, now supplied the German leadership with the best and sharpest weapons which a man of progress ever held in his hands. An immeasurable philosophical, artistic, political, organizational and pedagogic treasure; an army of men ready to fight and a host of sympathizers; an incomparably favorable situation; a sufficient material basis . . . all that and much more lay in the hands of the German "progressive" leadership of whatever color, when the hour for action had struck at last for Germany too. Germany's great men (they above all others) had wrested the saving perception by dint of unspeakable sufferings, privations and persecutions, in constant wrestling and struggle with themselves and the hostile outside world, under terrible degradations or self-abasements. They had bequeathed it to those for whom the forecast of a better, more joyfully active future was posed. Stone lay piled upon stone, weapon arrayed beside weapon, and Goethe had exhorted: "What thou hast inherited from thy fathers, acquire it in order to possess it".

The great moment found a wretched generation. Different "wonders" are achieved by a hammer in the hands of a sadistic slayer, a robber, an idiot, a traitor, a madman, a coward, than in the hands of a skilled industrious craftsman. The German intellectual, political and literary leaders of the time before Hitler who are still alive may choose their appropriate categories for themselves. But as soon as they try to escape from the "appropriate" and to smuggle themselves into the ranks of the industrious craftsmen, the spirit of Richard Wagner shall haunt them in their last refuge. Rising from his time as a bourgeois among bourgeois and marked as a bourgeois from top to toe in good as well as in evil, he displays an accomplishment

which puts to shame every excuse of the generations of leaders succeeding him. This accomplishment was there (as already said) before the young German imperialism had even had an opportunity to "test its wings". As it was ready to do so, Wagner had already spoken his last word on it. In 1883, in Venice, Wagner left a world which had nothing more to offer to him nor he to it.

For the betrayal of his accomplishment committed by the German leadership, for the exploitation of his work by the new German Wagnerians, he bears no more responsibility than does Marx for the atrocious falsification inflicted upon him by the same German (and international) leadership and by the . . . Fascists.⁸ As Marx could say of himself: "*Je ne suis pas Marxiste*", so Wagner: "I am not a Wagnerian", and Lenin: "I am no . . . Stalinist". And when Heine exclaimed: "I have sown dragons and reaped fleas", then he, Lenin, Wagner, Hegel, and a hundred others of high rank, would today, in view of the business ability of their "followers", have to correct their "error" in this way: We wanted men and got corpse worms.

So much on the biography of Wagner, whose personality is otherwise without any interest in the present context.

5. The prophecy in the "Ring of the Nibelung"

In Wagner's work is precisely as much and precisely as little fascism or "late-bourgeois terror" as in the heads of his accusers. With speech and counter-speech, with word-plays, with constructions of the plot, with childish and even insipid contradictions of the legend of the Gods, it is easy to argue and "prove". It must, however, be kept in mind constantly that it is *society* which is terroristic, and that the absurdities (in a word) are inseparable from *all* fables and, further, from every play. If these absurdities form an inexhaustible chapter of their own (just as their unlimited expansion under private property and among its apologists), they are kept together or finally unmasked as absurdities through that which, on the whole, obtains "preponderance". Here, too, it is not seldom that an overshadowing feature masters the mass of nonsense; here, too, the comprehensive attitude of a work often tells more about the real conviction (especially of an artist) than the author knows himself. In the case of the "Ring of the Nibelung" however, the matter is as simple as possible for everyone who has no need to hide his own guilt consciousness behind psychoanalysis, mass psychology and similar deceptions.

To begin with an objection against the play: the writer of these lines has, in the course of nearly thirty years, not been able to understand by any means why the giant Fafner with the help of the famous magic hood transforms himself into the awkward, unwieldy and clumsy dragon. For some time he has argued: the giant simply wanted to stick to his last. In the long run, this explanation could not satisfy him, if only because it smelt of psychology and therefore was no explanation at all. Sitting in his

⁸ It is useful to remember how Marx was not only slandered but also "positively" exploited. With "excerpts" from the pamphlet "On the Jewish Question", the Nazis made extensive propaganda against . . . the Jews. But "Capital" and other works were not spared either. And who will dispute that the Nazis had excellent models in the falsifications of the Social-Democrats and, for their part, still remained infinitely far behind Stalin?

study, at the staunch writing desk, he then pictured to himself how he would have acted in Wagner's and Fafner's place.

What possibilities! Right from the beginning he would have made himself *invisible* through the magic hood and would, in the first place and according to all rules of the strong giant art, have kicked the behind of everyone who did not "suit" him until the splinters flew. (No repression: pure terrorism!) Inconceivable why Fafner does not think at least of the magic hood's property of making him invisible when Siegfried has already wounded him in the tail. Instead of clumsily rearing up and having the sword of the Gods, Nothung, struck into his heart, he might still have muddled up the whole legend of the gods and turned it into a first class Offenbachiad. For instance, thus:

Primo, Siegfried is thrown about a thousand feet up into the air by the giant's uppercut. *Secundo*, he lands on his head in something soft. *Tertio*, Fafner laughingly leaves him sticking there. Fafner then, during the night, goes to Valhalla and administers an hitherto unheard-of box on the ear to the snoring Wotan. Wotan, who has his spouse lying by his side, naturally sees nothing. He, of course, thinks Fricka has once more given him the works although the procedure appears to him extraordinarily vigorous. Domestic scene, in the course of which all family skeletons come out of the cupboard. Valhalla rings with laughter. The witty Loki feels small and ugly because someone has done him out of his greatest prank. So he "represses" his anger and calls into existence the modern schools of psychology. Wotan has to retire and serve Fafner as maid. Siegfried, too, henceforth serves Fafner as stable boy and (*faute de mieux!*) falls in love with the maid Wotan. Fricka retains her position as fault-finding moral judge, only that now she has become many times more out of joint through the effect of Loki's psychology. She has become a professor of psychology and calls herself Erich Fromm. The "law against trash and immorality" of the Weimar Republic wrapped around the most mortal point of her anatomy, she searches the land for repressions, inferiorities, resentments and neuroses, being herself protected against such things by the immorality wrap or by a timid love letter to a deep-voiced office girl. She arrives on the scene just as Siegfried tries to "repress" Wotan's maidenly skirt and accuses him not of incest but of violation of Article 175 (also taken out of the treasury of the Weimar Republic).⁹ Siegfried has, in the meantime, learnt from Fafner what fear is, and Fafner, how to laugh. While Fafner collapses unconscious with laughter, Siegfried flies to the fallen heroes from Valhalla who now have constantly to clean the woods of its web of forest murmurs with a tooth brush. The fallen heroes perceive that something is wrong with Fafner. They suddenly become courageous (just that is psychology) and upon Siegfried's report foregather for a protest meeting against Article 175.

Loki, as the responsible psychological legislator, is pressed hard by them. Now the memorable events occur which have been classically described by the pig breeder in the "Gypsy Baron" (name repressed!) as his experiences during the Spanish campaign. Loki, in dire distress, gets ready for a psychological blow: one of the heroes strikes him. A hand-to-hand fight follows: sometimes Loki lies below the heroes, sometimes the heroes on

⁹ Article 175 comprised penalties against homo-sexuals; a truly barbaric article.

top of Loki. Finally Loki gathers all his strength: the heroes desperately take to flight, Loki always in the lead.

Here the episode of classical pattern ends, for in the race Loki stumbles over the head of the invisible Fafner lying unconscious. The impact tears the magic hood from Fafner's head. He suddenly becomes visible lying at full length between the fleeing heroes and Loki rushing in front of them. The heroes stop short: psychology takes its fatal course. Long-repressed sadism breaks through in the heroes. Before Fafner has opened one eye, they have cut him up with their tooth brushes into 7349 equal slices (this is a particularly enlightening moment). Fafner now looks like a great bloody pool. Into this Loki dives making good use of the heroes' repression through psychology. He fishes out the magic hood, hurriedly puts it on his head and wishes himself to Vienna. A second later he is in the Vienna City library. He asks for the writings of Karl Kraus. There he discovers the catchword: "Shakespeare knew everything". This is Loki's Damascus. He sees the mischief he has done, becomes fed up with the whole business and puts an end to the hoax. Turning to the public he says:

There you have your Gods . . . Shakespeare knew everything! What you will: "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." Or as you like it: "Sweet are the uses of adversity, which like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head".

As soon as Loki exits, it suddenly becomes as clear as day why Wagner had to stick to all the stupidities of the old saga. It is embarrassing for the psychologists, it is ridiculous and paradoxical, but the reason undoubtedly is that Wagner intended the same thing as the writer of these lines, only that he was, alas, just Richard Wagner and not the writer of these lines. That alone is the explanation why he precedes the satyr play with the tragedy, estimates one stupidity as highly as another and above all has the characters of his play, each and all, struck with blindness. Neither Siegfried nor Wotan are exempt. Siegfried, the "pure fool", only closes the "circle of infatuation". Wotan, on the other hand, has already lost half his integrity when he assumed his rule, and he heaps stupidity upon stupidity.

The stubbornness and exclusiveness with which Wagner treats the motif of general infatuation is astounding and of a force, truth and prophecy, as possesses no other work of art which tries to grasp the picture of society and to interpret its destiny. The "prime cause" of bourgeois society, the secret of its existence is revealed right in the beginning. Wotan, in order to carry out his designs, must use his artifice and cunning. Apart from these "resources" he appears completely helpless and powerless. For him, the giant Fasolt demarcates the limit of, so to speak, the "*fictio juris*" upon which the rule of the Gods rests:

"What thou art,
art thou only by treaties;
conditioned is,
well bethought thy power."

Nota bene: the treaties are a very doubtful matter. Wotan himself appraises them thus, for he does not spare himself the bitter truths concerning his existence. In his confession to Brünnhilde he says:

When youthful love's
 lust receded,
 for power then I longed:
 Driven by wishes
 sudden and wild,
 I won the world to me.
 Blindly deceiving
 I was unfaithful,
 binding by treaties
 what harbored ill . . .

Those we ruled before,
 binding by our law
 those men whose courage
 we wisely tamed,
 those who by deceiving ties
 of turbid treaties
 by dazed obedience
 we had chained to us . . .

As Wotan won the world, so it melts under his hands. With each step designed to avert the disaster, he is only led into deeper entanglement. Wotan knows this too, and proclaims the secret of his rule in his own way:

But with whom I treated,
 against him I can't strike;
 pow'rless would be
 before him my heart.
 These are the fetters
 by which I'm bound:
 I by treaties the ruler
 the treaties now make me their slave . . .

I have touched Alberic's Ring —
 eager, I held the gold!
 The curse that I fled
 now does not flee me: —
 All that I love I must relinquish,
 murder whatever is dear,
 deceitful betray who trusted me! —
 Down then with the imperious pomp,
 the divine splendour's boisterous shame!
 Be crushed to ruins all I have raised!
 Up give I my work,
 one thing only I still will:
 The ending — the ending!

6. Significance of the infatuation motif for our time.

If Wagner had left nothing behind but the enraptured portrayal of bourgeois infatuation, our time, were it not affected by the same infatuation, would have to do him full justice and rank him among the greatest seers of humanity. He himself has been betrayed by those who accused him

of betrayal of a revolution which "was none", but he has, after the misery of that revolution, accomplished one of the greatest revolutions in the history of mankind. The seventy years that have elapsed since the première of the "Goetterdaemmerung" have demonstrated the infatuation-context of bourgeois society in everything that lives and exists: in the upper world and in the "underworld", in Wotan and Siegfried, in giants and dwarfs, in the decline of the Russian Revolution, in the putrefaction of the labor movement, etc.

With the colossal work which, with all its crackedness (which is, moreover, the crackedness of the world itself), the bourgeois genius Wagner wrested out of himself, he has indeed been carried at once to the point which society has reached in the catastrophic doom of the present world war. The inexorability with which he casts aside all interim solutions and wants only the "ending" which he has recognized as inevitable, is only now seen in all its impressive greatness. He submits no recipes, he denies himself the tricks of "organized capitalism", of the "general cartel", of "economic democracy" and similar swindles. On the contrary: he unmasks them uncompromisingly as bourgeois tricks, which lead only deeper into the network of infatuation and (as facts show) make the catastrophe still more inevitable. Wagner therefore is not one-hundredth part as stupid and treacherous as his present-day critics and those sages who have from an allegedly "more than bourgeois standpoint" brought into the world the above swindles. T. W. Adorno, for instance, perceives correctly:

"In the midst of a distorted picture of community, the insight is won, however, which mercilessly strikes the face of existing society. Even the mythical entanglement of world history in the Ring is not only an expression of deterministic metaphysics, but posits at the same time criticism of the badly determined world. The Wagnerian pre-decision of conflicts is identical with the infatuation-context of bourgeois society which proves itself most powerful where bourgeois consciousness fancies to raise itself to self-consciousness".

Although more might be said about the distorted picture of community (where was Wagner to get an "undistorted" one for his drama?) and also about the determinist metaphysics, the closing sentence grasps the matter extremely well — the world has seen no better school than that from which have emerged such perceptions and formulations.

All the more tragic is it how the bourgeois infatuation affirms itself in Adorno too. All achievements of Wagner, which he emphasizes and more or less adequately classifies, are subjected to the devaluating judgements of a psychology which makes the achievements suspect by casting suspicion on their creator. Wagner is outfitted abundantly with sadistic urges of self-debasement, sentimental placability, denunciation, self-denunciation, envy, destructive urge, idiosyncratic hate (aversion as fear of being recognized by the nauseous object as its own kind), turbid Eros and the like. No motive, no phenomenon (be it love, humour, lust, passion or compassion) which when discovered in Wagner would not at once be interpreted and *lastingly* chalked up as a subjective corruption, an open or secret vice and "inferiority" as such. Dominated by the urge to press the material into a preconceived scheme without separating the ingredients according to their

specific weight, the "evidences" are selected from Wagner's life and his texts in a picturesque jumble. The whole does not read like a treatise on an historical subject, sufficiently distant to permit a view of the general interconnections, the historical relations and the results; it reads like a breathless polemic written in the heat of a combat in which the objective opponent is lacking and which serves only to appease one's own guilty conscience.

The consequence is that the social research and the "social character" of Wagner's work present themselves as the product of subjectively bad character traits beyond all social character. Thus it is self-evident that *the essence is not even perceived*, let alone properly classified :

"In the gloomy spell [how awful! W.L.] of Wagner's reaction are sketched the revolutionary letters which his work wrested from his character".

The main emphasis in Adorno always lies on the subjective "character" from which a work, God alone knows *how*, "wrested" something. But the task of social research should be to show how the social character of an epoch *permeates* through its exponents; how the necessity of artistic, philosophic and other configurations of this epoch and its driving tendencies announces itself in the midst of specific conditions in certain individuals; how this necessity wrests a *work* from individuals and goes as far with it as the conditions of the case in question permit, etc.

To the charge that Wagner pursues his victims (what sense is made with "victims" at all?) down to their "biological fatality", Adorno immediately adds:

" . . . because he recognized himself as one who only narrowly escaped the image of a dwarf".

Thus Adorno pursues his victim into . . . biological fatality; a procedure which is essential for modern psychology.

Indeed: modern psychology, from whichever side one tackles it, reveals itself everywhere to be the most modern *ideological* attempt to anchor anew, in a pseudo-scientific way, the "guilt consciousness" (original sin) of Christian society, which had been driven from all hiding places. Society cannot exist without this guilt consciousness, because, together with the guilt-laden victim, the god of private property himself would fall, just as the rich together with the abolition of the poor. With totem and taboo; with Oedipus complex and biological facts of sex life; with individual and mass psychology and similar humbug is therefore the guilt consciousness of the individual, faded by the experience of millennia, transferred by psychological systems right into the . . . biological fatality. With the alleged psychological full consciousness, even those are again drawn into the circle of infatuation who had at least partially raised themselves to self-consciousness. (Cf. Adorno's above formulation.)

It can be taken as proven that this circle of infatuation must be paced out and exhausted not only theoretically but also practically before it releases the consciousness of man for the confrontation with "scientifically" falsified basic facts. The "peace" which will follow this war will reveal a deception and a delusion which undoubtedly will prove to have been most powerful at the very place where one pretended to have found the philosopher's stone. The swindle of the pseudo-scientific theories in their latest form is certainly the last link in the chain of theoretical infatuation. The

yawning spiritual emptiness of these theories, which glue together a bursting world with spit, will be felt. They shout *immediate real* treason at a time when on the order of the day stands no longer a new "cognition" of the effectiveness of "treaties to be concluded" (the "democratic" psychological system of Messrs. Fromm and Company) but the deed, the practical execution of the Goetterdaemmerung proclaimed by Wagner, the overthrow of the God who is himself comprised in the compulsion of the system.

The immortal merit of Richard Wagner is to have revealed comprehensively the nothingness, the premeditated deception, the even more foolish and more clumsy entanglement of society in all the recipes contrived after the proclamation of the Goetterdaemmerung. The psychological and other objections to Wagner carry no weight at all. But the merciless vision has been proved right with which Wagner strikes himself (in this Adorno is in words correct even though the words are placed in the wrong frame) and a demented society together with its workers' movement that has perished through its infatuation. His achievement stretches into our time like a heavy shadow which absorbs and reduces to nothing all that comes after him. It is the only achievement which surpasses the bourgeoisie with its self-destruction. It demarcates the limit of bourgeois perceptibility and thereby defines the point where consciousness, abused and corrupted by treaties (among them those with Stalin), can rally again and orient itself in the downfall of society which has become a tangible reality.

This taken into consideration, it is not only an anachronism but also an unexampled unjustified nonsense to approach an important man like Richard Wagner, sixty years after his death, from the standpoint of "treason". For as often as one comes to talk about the only *allegedly* betrayed German bourgeois revolution, it always shows itself as one which "was none". Not a single one of its participants could eliminate the circumstance that the German bourgeoisie had to go through a development different from, for instance, the French. That is why no bourgeoisie on earth has produced from its midst a Wagner who applied to its system a prognosis so radical and so incisive in historic reality. Not even Marx and Engels, who already had set out upon the non-bourgeois road and were involved in the revolution, have, after the close of the fighting, judged so wildly the participants of the unfortunate undertaking as T. W. Adorno does, after seventy years of Goetterdaemmerung, about the one who, in spite of everything, was the most revolutionary amongst them.

Yet for our time nothing is so appropriate as the insight that all treaties concluded since Wagner are deception. But Wagner's importance is not limited to this. Still more important than the scornful unconcern with which he shoves aside the zealous recipe-makers and soothsayers and leads to the Goetterdaemmerung of our days . . . more important than that and a hundred other features of his work is, for the deceived ones, Wagner's treatment and solution of the "guilt question". Meant is that "guilt" with which society burdens the individual and by the maintenance of which it lives to the day of its final downfall (Adorno, too, operates with a guilt which Wagner cannot have). How is it to be explained that T. W. Adorno does not even see this *most important* momentum wherein the whole work of Wagner is fixed and "interprets" itself? That is explained summarily by the circumstance already noted, that modern psychology is only a very

turbid treaty with society, which needs a continually renewed fixation of guilt as a *fundamental fact of the world* (this or that *concrete* guilt is a question apart).

7. The first and last guilty one.

T. W. Adorno's unconsciousness concerning Wagner's disposal of the guilt question is the more astounding, the more unequivocally and decisively Wagner exposes it, from the beginning, as the only decisive momentum. Yet the mechanism of his failure is the same as in Christian theology. In its most highly developed systems the latter is prepared, under certain circumstances, to abandon all religious dogmas and all attributes of God. One thing only is stubbornly defended: original sin, whether it is presented masked as "the ineradicably evil character of the world", as predestination, or as something else. Christian theology cannot exist without guilt, and that is the point which connects it systematically with modern psychology (the theology for "enlightened" people with all kinds of "complexes"). The guilt question, as such, is thus taboo for Adorno too, who simply evades discussing it in Wagner. He maintains the guilt-consciousness itself in Wagner's person and in the biological facts and transfers what one might call, in his sense, the applicability of Wagner's achievement beyond Wagner's evil character into the mystical sphere of "interpretation", where it must henceforth be discovered through the subjective abilities of the interpreter (we shall have the opportunity to observe the act of predestined election).

In the face of this old complex, Wagner surely appears as a strict determinist who seizes the bull by the horns and solves the problem in the natural way by carrying it to the end. Liberation or "redemption" of the world from its evil is, with him, exactly the same as Hegel's freedom: insight into the historical necessity. Standing on a truly scientific level, he clings to the great cognition modulated by Goethe, Kant, Hegel, Marx, etc.: all that exists is, with its nascence, also worth its destruction. However great the concrete guilt may be (for instance that of Alberic who steals the Rheingold): it recedes and explains itself solely through the *essence* of that world with which Wagner had to deal. Thus this world goes under of *itself*.

Without bringing in details pertaining to T. W. Adorno, Wagner's insight can be *directly* utilized and grasped by everyone who merely decides to follow his narrative. In a quite simple and unique way, Wagner assigns the "guilt" under which everything suffers *to the God and those treaties the runes of which he cuts into the shaft of his world-dominating spear*. The Gods become a matter of causality: the world ails of its ruler and of the institutions he protects, for in contradistinction to the *Creator* of Christian legend and the "inherent, inalienable rights of man" of mass psychology, Wagner knows only eternal nature and God who has *usurped* the rule of the world.

Yet where Christian theology entrenches itself behind the notion of original sin (or its equivalents) in order to save a wholly essenceless and propertyless God, Wagner drives out even this void remnant of him. In other words: he proves him to be a causal and transitory institution and relegates him to the historically concrete fate of his doom. Only when

Valhalla goes up in flames and consumes the Gods, does guilt disappear from the earth. Then only can the accursed gold be returned to the Rhine daughters and reconverted into the innocent, neither good nor bad tinsel it was before a God entangled himself in its curse *through his own guilt*. Genially simple and yet endowed with rich features as Wagner's social allegory is, it can be correctly evaluated only if full objectivity is displayed toward the supporting construction. The actual state of the allegory is this:

The power and splendor of the Gods rest (the word "rest" underlines the causal connection) on their high-mindedness, their justice and unadorned honorable way of acting. The social contrasts exist (depicted by the four spheres in which dwell the Gods, the giants, the men and the dwarfs), but as long as the Gods keep to their ideals, they rule "supreme". The four classes came only rarely into contact with each other. Each class led a life of its own, led it according to its own tastes and needs. No class possessed something which another could covet: world peace was secured thereby.

And yet the Goetterdaemmerung has long been foretold. From the first moment Wotan is only *primus inter pares* in the circle of the Gods. Outside the narrow circle of the Gods he is powerless and must, to attain his aims, fall back on the already mentioned resources of cunning and craftiness. But why?

Like every ruler-God, Wotan is naturally imagined as altogether aristocratic and noble. For his high rank he has to thank his high wisdom. Just this is now the hook on which Wagner hangs him and all the Gods of the world once and for all.

In order to attain his high wisdom, Wotan has compromised himself and challenged destiny. Long since chief of the Gods, he nevertheless committed in his youth the "sin" of drinking from the forbidden spring whence all wisdom comes. If he has thus breached the primordial bond with nature and captured wisdom: on the other side he was compelled "to pay one of his eyes as eternal tribute" for his sacrilege. Then, in arrogance and pride, Wotan broke a branch from the world-ash near the spring. From its trunk he cut the "shaft of a spear" with which he henceforth rules the world. Into the shaft he then carves the treaty runes which fetter the "free" and bind them to his rule.

All this is scientifically clear. Man, without protection in the face of Nature, cannot avoid violating her in the want of life ("driven by wishes, sudden and wild"). By "someone", "somewhere", "somehow", the wisdom-yielding spring, the life-giving Tree of Nature *must* be sullied and breached, if Man is not to disappear from the earth.³⁰

It is highly characteristic that Wagner keeps completely on the level of this still valid philosophical and scientific perception of the 19th century. There is no *allegory* (and therefore also no more easily attainable perception) which is more scientifically exact than Wagner's.

He, whom the want of life drives to test himself by perception, transgresses the Bond of Nature: he confronts her and *appears* to his environment as the "dauntless God" who comes "to drink from the spring". With

³⁰ Once again: Only mass psychology can have the deplorable courage, in view of the tyranny of nature over man, to attain with the aid of "inherent and inalienable rights of man" its desired ends (it is especially concerned to fix the guilt of the German people). It is clear that, because of "alienation" of these rights, the Germans must be placed under tutelage and "re-educated".

the first perception, however, which outwits Nature and seeks to conserve and regulate it against its blind (demoniacal) course, is also given the loss of the natural integrity for which Wotan's one-eyedness is the symbol. Having certainly become "wiser" through perception than all others, Wotan is yet prevented by his one-eyedness from seeing in every instant what is right, i.e. from perceiving in time the consequences of his actions for the whole.

The question arises, what is the content of the "first" perception. As a "perception", Wagner honestly says nothing about it, for it is, to begin with, nothing but the subordination of nature to the needs of Man, made possible without "human rights" after long primeval toil and experience. This subordination, however, is only *partial* (in this lies the meaning of half-blindness) and includes for this very reason, compulsory as is the insight into the possibility of controlling Nature, the absolute compulsion to rule over society (the world). Complete or all-embracing perception "at one stroke" is impossible. The only *partial* perception, which at once splits the perceiver into a blind and a seeing half, is therefore presented by Wagner not as perception but as an *act* breaching Nature. A part of Nature (the branch Wotan wrests off the world-ash and shapes into an instrument of his rule) becomes separated from her and transformed into a means of her subjugation, man himself being included as a part of Nature to be subjugated. From then on, a wound gapes in the tree of life and the source of cognition becomes troubled. Thus the Nornes sing:

In the long course of time
the wound consumed the forest;
fallow fell the leaves,
dry withered the tree.
Sadly, the drink
from the fountain dried;
dark with sorrow
waxed then my song.
But if I weave
no longer at the world-ash,
so must the fir tree
be worthy to tie my line.

Thus primordial Nature is progressively devastated with the progress of subjugation (in the long course of time), while a part of nature and society either evade the regulating contract altogether, or can be made to conform to the "New Order" only by naked force. Mere partial domination of Nature must evoke the resistance both of the tamed and unbound elements. Man and element try all the more forcefully to evade coercion, the more the power and wealth of the ruling minority grow with increasing devastation. Wotan says of one of the elements, the fire-God Loki (a mixture of Hermes/Mercury and Mephisto):

Cunningly tempted me Loki
who thereafter vanish'd.

About the same Loki, the Nornes say:
With the spear's magic spell
tamed him Wotan;
counsels gave he the god:

at the runes of the shaft
to guess himself free
eagerly gnawed his teeth.

That is the outwitting of Man by outwitted Nature, for the social counterpart of which the dialogue between Wotan and Alberic is especially characteristic. Alberic:

Beware! all thy wiles
well do I know;
but where you are weak
to me too is no secret.
With treasures of mine
hast thou paid thy debts;
my ring has paid
the giants' toil,
those who have built thee thy burg.
What was with the grim ones
long agreed upon
is maintained to this day
in the runes of thy ruling shaft.
Thou mayst not
what as price thou hast paid
tear back again from the giants:
Thy spear thou indeed
wouldst splinter thyself:
In thine own hand
the dominant staff,
the strong one would split like a straw.

Thereupon Wotan, with reference to the "double character" of his spear:

Through no runes of loyal treaty
wert thou bound
by it, base one:
it bowed thee down but by its strength:
for war I ward it then well.

Hardly ever has the essence of bourgeois democracy been unmasked more beautifully, more strikingly, more simply: in one half it consists of "turbid" treaties (no sooner have they come into force, than they are already rendered impossible by the development and have to be "supplemented" by cunning, violence and fraud); in the other half it consists simply of naked dictatorship. For, in stark contrast to T. W. Adorno's imputations, the attitude of all Wagner's characters, their way of speaking and acting, the context of the action, etc., are permeated by a democratic concept which has in such perfection not yet been realized by any bourgeoisie or Social-Democracy on earth. The most outstanding feature of this concept is that a democrat ought above all to speak the whole truth about the status of democracy. All guilt is with the rulers. If surely the first and *elementary* guilt (as the compulsion to subjugate nature and as the compulsion to rule) is *self-evident* and therefore, *as guilt*, need not be discussed, nevertheless the *eternal contradiction* between nature and society is set in motion through the ruler as *historical antagonism* between society and nature, individual

and society. This antagonism is transferred by the ruler into the dialectics of progress and retrogression, equality and inequality, cognition and infatuation, and all the other pairs of opposites.

Private property over nature and power to dispose over man who belongs to nature, are irreconcilable with the essence of the whole. The *concrete* or debatable guilt begins thus where the development has gone beyond existing conditions. From then onward, hitherto valid treaties and violence can no longer stop the development, but violence becomes the only recourse. Of necessity, this results, first of all, in splitting the ruling clan into one cautious (conservative) part and one striving for expansion of power.

Is it accidental coincidence or intention? . . . in any case, it is the hand of genius which makes Wagner, with sure grip, start action and conflict just at this very point.

The time has come for the theft of the Rheingold; the long foretold end of the Gods now announces itself as the consequence of laws which have become historically effective. Genial and only genial how Wagner conceives the "Rheingold" without interruption between the acts, the changes of scene bridged only by musical interludes which lead into the different spheres of society. This is the scientific and rational indication of the circumstance that the following moments belong together and condition one another. The theft of the Rheingold coincides in time with the completion of Valhalla: when Alberic disappears with the gold into the depths, the completed Valhalla appears in the splendour of the new day. This signifies: The fundament of Wotan's rule is shaken at the same moment in which the power and splendor of the Gods are finished and crowned by its symbol, Valhalla.

But against Alberic who would gain through the ring "the world's inheritance", Wotan might yet be victorious, *if he were still free within the framework of his own order*. Consciously or unconsciously for Wagner, Hegel's penetrating spirit hovers over the scenery: No *outside* power breaks down Wotan's might but its *own* nature. Beginning and end, perfection and decay are linked into each other: perfection bears within itself the mortal sting — a definable limit between perfection and decay does not exist. With the last "free" contract (that is to say, a contract roughly corresponding to existing conditions) which Wotan has concluded with the giants, his deep-rooted dependence and the derangement of his rule become already starkly visible. This is the nature of all things: by their immanent limit they are driven beyond their limit and destroyed. As Wotan, the one-eyed sage, rejoices at the sight of Valhalla and sees his will realized, he appears as a sage who equally is . . . not one. This is the hook, as has been said, on which he hangs himself with Wagner's consent.

For the point round which the whole conflict hinges and which T. W. Adorno has, like so many other things, totally neglected, is the fact that the Gods can achieve the perfection of their splendor only upon condition of *giving up their youth*. The compensation which the giants have stipulated *by treaty* for the erection of Valhalla, is a part of Godliness, the Goddess of youth herself. A profound thought: the highest maturity is accompanied by the full beginning of dissolution. The time is ripe for the fulfilment of this treaty condition with the fulfilment of Wotan's

will. Whatever he may undertake now in order to conserve the youth of the Gods, it cannot stay execution of the sentence. Ruses, cunning, praetorian guard, breach of treaty, faithlessness, fraud and even Siegfried can at best determine the *concrete process* of ageing. The utmost that the infatuated Wotan himself can possibly achieve and, in Wagner's work, actually does achieve is the acknowledgement of the historic destiny. Just as, after the break with unconscious nature, all perception takes the detour over the social process, so Wotan, too, regains his vision only through this process. He is "free" only in so far as he bows to the historical necessity of his downfall and finally *wills* it:

So I take then my blessing,
son of the Nibelung!
What deep disgusts me
you are to inherit:
The empty splendor of Gods.

How perfection and destruction interpenetrate; how the given organism transgresses its limits; how this transgression manifests itself in the splitting of the ruler's will, one part striving after "mature maintenance" of what has been achieved (conservatism), the other trying to counter decay by expansion of power (reaction); how this accentuates the basic conflict instead of mitigating it, etc., is brilliantly shaped in the dialogue between Wotan and Fricka:

Fricka — Though fair thy tow'r
 I tremble for Freya.
 The castle finished
 now falleth the bond.
 Forgettest what thou must give?

Wotan — I mind well all they demanded,
 who have built me this tow'r there;
 by treaty tamed I
 their defiant breed,
 so that they build me
 this splendid castle;
 it stands now — thanks to their strength! —
 For the price pray have no heed.

Fricka— Had I but known of this bond,
 the fraud I had prevented:
 yet well were you pleased
 to part from the women,
 so not confiding in us,
 alone to confer with the giants.
 Thus without shame
 you gave impudently
 away my sweet sister Freya,
 even glad for the trade.
 What is to you then
 still holy and dear
 when you men want power.

- Wotan — The same want
 did not Fricka feel
 when for the building she pled?
- Fricka — O'er my mate's faithfulness worried
 sadly I must consider
 how to hold him beside me
 when he was seeking to stray:
 bright gleaming homestead,
 delightful decor,
 should tie thee with soft bonds
 to linger and seek in them rest.
 But thou with this homestead thought
 of fence and force alone:
 Power and might
 it shall augment thee:
 to cause only storm more tumultuous
 the castle had to be built.
- Wotan
 (smiling) — If with these walls
 thou, O wife, shouldst entwine me,
 to my Godhood you must grant then,
 that, in the tow'r
 confined, I may
 still from the outside win me the world.
 Shift and change loves
 he who lives:
 the play thus I can't dispense with.

As anticipated in the parody: During this nice domestic scene, all family skeletons emerge indeed from their cupboards. Wotan, the impotent, has marked his regime by broken and forgotten treaties. Though he knows that therewith the Goetterdaemmerung is accelerated, he has even now not in mind to keep his promise. Henceforth, to his own disgust, he finds in all he effects, eternally only himself. On the other hand Fricka, this mixture of Juno and Offenbach's "public opinion", at bottom wants the same as Wotan. But she perceives the weak point and tries to avert the danger in her own way. That is why this guardian of "wedlock and oath" cries now loudest for . . . breach of treaty for which, of course, the "moral" justification is not lacking. Again the natural is only obvious: public opinion exists exclusively for patching up the cracks appearing in society, and it lies in the nature of the thing itself if it therewith grows over the head of its master. In every thinkable respect, Wotan is "the slave of the treaties", prisoner in his own noose.

And thus stands the whole action in the sign of the God's guilt: Siegmund and Siegfried shall neither themselves nor "man" redeem from guilt. They shall, reversely, first save the *Gods* and finally, when Wotan confesses his self-deception, drive the guilt of the *Gods* out of the world and bring about their end. God is the first and last guilty one. In the liberation from him who represents private property in the world and who lets

himself be driven out forever *with the help of this institution*, is to be found the grandeur and unique importance of Wagner's achievement, the individual features of which can only be classified and correctly (justly) judged from this overshadowing moment.

8. Wagner's historical position, his mission and its latest result.

The history of God is the annihilating criticism of God: the history of *his* world is also the judgement of it. If such a perception is so consistent and radical as with Wagner, it makes already appear therewith those forces which, according to T. W. Adorno, "are freed in Wagner's work in the early period of bourgeois decay". Meant are those forces which, in agreement with the formulations of the world's best school so far, Adorno calls *the possibilities of another society* which the existing and *decaying society develops within itself*. The passage referred to in Adorno reads literally:

"But if the decaying society develops in itself the possibilities of the other which perhaps once will take its place, then Nietzsche has misjudged the forces which are freed in Wagner's work in the early period of bourgeois decay: in this lies his injustice against Wagner. There is no feature of decay in Wagner's work out of which the productive power had not succeeded in forcing moments of becoming".

What is of importance here: More than this was and could not be demanded from Wagner, still less can it be demanded today. He did what he could and only a rogue does more than he can. If his deed is not the future itself, then it is its indispensable pre-condition, for it forces out the moments of becoming with the destruction of the present. That is why the historic sequence into which Wagner belongs is always the same. Before Wagner, there are the great utopians who appear in the countries of bourgeois action. They perceive the evil of bourgeois society already with its becoming, but they want to cure it by means which are *not yet developed out of itself*.

The next great landmark in the course of bourgeois development is the unique phenomenon Wagner. He appears in the country of half-measures and late-coming and perceives, beyond vacillations and single acts, that nothing, literally nothing can free the world from its ensnarement except the removal of God and the system upon which he is based. That is the real content of the allegedly so "inflated" notion of the redemption of the world in Wagner. Whether he lets the redemption take place in ecstasy or asceticism, after the pattern of "Death and Transfiguration" or in a mixture of twenty different kinds of neuroses, remains irrelevant for the state of affairs itself. Social research would have the task of explaining ecstasy and asceticism, but not of condemning them psychologically. For if the stigma of society is insecurity, then the neuroses are once more obvious, and as long as no feature of decay is without moments of becoming, the "redemption of the world" remains very genuine.

Wagner takes his destruction and that of society seriously. That is what makes him fruitful, makes his achievement genuine, and gives him and every other bourgeois the right to celebrate the giving-up of himself in the allegory as an heroic act which the honoured bourgeois ideologists need only emulate in order to clear up all their contradictory urges. At the same

time, however, the consistent giving-up of what is bourgeois makes Wagner unique and counterposes him to two large groups which appear before, with and after him.

The first group is that of the honest but narrow idealists, quacks, charlatans, etc., who have achieved fame under the names of Proudhon, "German Socialists", Fabians, Dühring, etc. The second group consists of those who, after the success or failure of the bourgeois revolution, could be the *only* traitors *objectively possible*. These are the pretentious, partly educated, partly illiterate, partly brutal and violent persons who can be found in the lists of the leaders of the Social-Democratic and "Communist" parties of the world. These are the ones who have strangled *real* revolutions, have perpetrated real acts of terrorism and psychological violence and have evoked the chaos. Both groups overlap and have the social function of upholding the infatuation-context, to renew it and to exhaust it both theoretically and practically in detail.

If therefore Wagner really, as T. W. Adorno admits, "not completely without legitimacy compared himself with the interpreter of dreams rather than with the dreamer", then he has interpreted the dream even better and more profoundly than Marx who supposed it possible that the new society could be achieved before infatuation would have exhausted itself in the self-destruction of bourgeois society.

For the failure of all revolutionary endeavours through blindness of the leadership (as far as there was not simple treachery) is up to the present day a fact which, in the interest of the future, has to be acknowledged without qualification. The first demand to be made upon "interpretative", that is to say creative criticism, reads:

Count with given facts regardless of whom they concern. Mind the living wisdom that "the play cannot be dispensed with". Clear the ground, for the significance of work and deed changes together with time and conditions: great works, above all, reveal their range only in the light of a present which could state how much of them the tooth of time had been able to gnaw away. Seek the essence of the work; make no claims which lie outside of the matter. After all, the reproach of critical resentment is justified only where criticism, infatuated itself (Adorno's case), befalls the arena.

From these points of view, we find for Wagner: Genially as he combines the dominating motives in the Rheingold and generally reduces everything to "leitmotifs", so they flow into the historical plain where, over great periods of time and without regard to Wotan's plans, they now take on contours and effectuate the twilight of the Gods. Adorno, too, confirms this in typical distorted form when he notes about Wagner:

"The imperialist dreams the catastrophic character of imperialism; the bourgeois nihilist sees through the mechanism of the bourgeois urge for destruction in the epoch after him. At the end of his late essay, 'Religion and Art', he says that 'The progressing art of war turns more and more away from the springs of moral forces towards the cultivation of mechanical powers: here the crudest forces of the basest natural powers are fitted into an artificial play in which, in spite of all mathematics and arithmetics, the blind will could intervene, breaking out one day in its own way with elemental force. Already the armored monitors against which the proud

and splendid frigate can no longer stand, offer us a ghostly gruesome view: mutely resigned humans, who no longer look like human beings, serve these monsters, and even from the horrible boiler rooms they will no longer desert: yet as everything in nature has its destructive enemy, so art creates also torpedoes in the sea, everywhere dynamite cartridges and the like. One should believe that all this, together with art, science, gallantry and point of honor, life and possessions could be blown into the air one day through an incalculable mistake'."

A gift to Adorno of the bourgeois (finally for once the right word) "nihilist" and the "imperialist" since Wagner already as one who "sees through" negates them both: but was not this "seeing through" the bourgeois urge for destruction in the "epoch after him" Wagner's true mission? Indeed, he, who could say of himself "I have completed my mission victoriously", remains presently the sole victor after the intervals of time during which his tetralogy transmits itself into concrete bourgeois reality. The execution of the social drama approaches its end:

"Already" the races or tribes of the world are swinging back over Channel and Ocean to the Rhine to win the ring of accursed gold for themselves. Adolf Hitler presents himself as the "Siegfried" of historic reality who, as the duly installed hero of Wotan (the big bourgeoisie), always "triumphed before he had fought".¹¹ Hitler, then, this narrow petit-bourgeois who has gone wild and who is the caricature of the nature-child, will be slain in the modern hunting with aeroplanes and tanks as assuredly as was Wagner's ideal character. The ensuing scuffle among the merry hunters and their mutual killing over possession of the world-dominating ring will not be long in coming. In the general chaos, the unchained elements will possibly, like the Rhine, rise above their banks, mingle in the roaring conflagration and also drag to the depths the sinister super-Hagen in the Kremlin. In any case (and in whichever way the conflagration may be brought to Valhalla): the blind will have definitely intervened and will not rest before it has buried the Gods under the ruins of their splendor. In the midst of this ever-widening devastation, the task is to crystallize the perception which bursts the closing circle of infatuation and which remains after all tormented humanity has endured through honest effort and disgraceful treachery. It must be stressed:

How infinitely more superior, more farsighted, more courageous, more honest and more profound was Wagner with his merciless expulsion of the guilty God, compared with the multi-colored apologists of the "blessing" Christian world order against which Wagner aimed his crushing stroke. The God of private property, not the work of Richard Wagner, is simultaneously the creator and the only too willing "prophet and zealous beadle of imperialism and late bourgeois terrorism". He and nobody else was, in early times, the first terrorist; nobody else will be the last. It is he who teutonized the whole earth in the most barbaric manner, who has subjected Japan, China, Africa, India, the happy children of the South Seas, in short, all the ravished and hounded-to-death colored peoples together with all fauna and flora to the searing curse of the Ring of the Nibelung.

¹¹ Adorno uses this as an "objection" against Wagner, whereas it is in full agreement with his conception of "pure execution".

But something else must be especially insisted upon today, where also the historical circle round England is closing. It is namely not the "Germans" east of the Rhine who have unleashed the true *furor teutonicus* of Christian breeding, but the original teutonic Anglo-Saxons on the Thames. They have been its most merciless and reckless pioneers who smothered every resistance with blood and fire. It is they again who have taken the most furious and cruel part in the christianization of North America, always ready to wage war against and to enslave their own brother pioneers. And it is they who now (poor Europe!) swing back across Channel and Ocean to the Rhine and burden the bled-white peoples with a responsibility which can be nothing but a camouflage for their own bloody crimes.

May England and America, when they hold for the second time after the victory the fate of the world in their hands, laugh in complete infatuation at the threateningly raised hand of the felled "Siegfried". May they toss aside Wagner's challenge to emulate the guilty Wotan with a great gesture of resignation. Then all the more terrible will be their ruin and all the more will it remain true that Wagner destroyed the myth on which Christian society feeds: the myth of the innocence of God and the guilt of his creatures. If nothing is being salvaged from chaos and ruin but the perception that private property and its institutions are the sole culprits who hold humanity in their iron grip and infatuate and ruin it under the coercion of their system, then the most important link into the future is salvaged.

Psychological Coda

(Satire after the tragedy)

In order to make this perception victorious, a bitter struggle must be fought against all conscious and unconscious attempts to cloud it anew. One knows already: Bourgeois society cannot do without anchoring the guilt consciousness in God's *creatures* (whose redemption on penalty of eternal condemnation is not made dependent upon God's *disappearance*, as with Wagner, but upon His "grace"). Miserably wasting away, the bourgeoisie tries to implant guilt consciousness in a thousand clumsy and skilful ways, and it has found (to its own consolation and justification and to the renewed injury of its victims) a new method, a new opiate in the form of *modern psychology*.

The weak spot of this psychology is most easily revealed in its applicability to any given . . . psychologist. For there has never been a psychological analyst who was not himself in need of analysis, and that is why modern psychology has to be defined as a form of petit-bourgeois ideology. It is characteristic for such ideologies to be a hodge-podge of all possible and impossible fields of knowledge and, even more, a compilation of ignorant platitudes. This had already been perceived, in his own way, by A. Lange who considered the critique of psychology to be an undertaking by which "the largest part of this 'science' would be demonstrated to consist of babble and self-deception". The self-deception — in the days of old Lange still a highly cultured affair compared with the prestidigitations of today — is what matters. In methods and results applicable to everybody, it yields everywhere the same and therefore — nothing. In this self-deception, the petit-bourgeois, simultaneously dependent and venge-

ful (Arther Koestler is a fine specimen), communicates with all others in his disappointment with the world and therewith he can feel comforted. For the operation consists in bringing all people of character finally so far down that the psychologizing petit-bourgeois finds himself "at the same level" with every genius, can piss with him into the same dirty gutter and from this derive justification for the familiar "pal".

The omnipresence of complexes and symbols, inherited from biology, anthropology, etc., which, on the one hand, excuses everything, opens on the other hand the possibility for self-righteous wretchedness to indulge in the feeling of "superiority" and to cast suspicion on the fortes of the neighbor with the help of the inferiority of wretchedness.

For this reason, quite in accord with the scheme of the *unfulfillable* commands of Moses, modern psychology is nothing but the "scientific" substitute for the auricular confession which "reveals" to the analyst the "most secret" thoughts of the suffering patient which are tacitly assumed as known. It is only necessary to mutually lay the trap of these unfulfillable commandments to have at once (saying nothing of sanctioned great crimes such as war, pillaging or the extermination of whole peoples, etc.) the hackneyed result at hand: I adulter; thou dost calumniate; he embezzles; it onanizes; we fornicate (or look in vain for a brothel), etc.

In addition, it is to be said of the psychological legislators: You go wrong and totally misunderstand. Like the priest who, after giving absolution, goes to confession himself and there again tells only what is long known, so waits for you at every street corner the avenging analyst who knows your most "hidden" thoughts before you have revealed them.

Here it is worth remarking that there is a perception which Wagner (beyond the doom of the "Ring") unfolds in "Parsifal". It is not an "original" Wagnerian thought and Freud, too, was once close to it: *The wound can only be healed by the shaft of the same spear whose point caused it.*

In modern version (based upon the present state of science) this old idea of "redemption" of the world by a definable and concrete means would sound: The evil is *temporary*, it lies wholly in the historical process, and it carries the formal means for its overcoming in itself.

Of decisive importance for judging modern psychology as a form of mere ideological fraud is therefore the fact that just by the extension of psychology into sociology this fertile perception is "repressed" from the realm of society and is turned into the field of the abstract. From now on, the wound is no longer caused by the concrete social struggle for emancipation of man against nature; it is ingrained, rather, as an inextinguishable "original evil" in biological and anthropological facts which, for their part, are made to *determine* the social process (which procedure is in no way altered if one gives the swindle a "positive" turn and presents the unchangeable, inherent and inalienable "rights of man" in the metaphysical-abstract threadbareness of the Institute for Social Research). "Redemption" is finally (parallel to the "reason" of bourgeois revolution and to the "divine act of grace" of Christianity) only a matter of psychological analysis which, over the heads of many who are called, is always practised only by the chosen few. Chosen, however, for eons is only the one who has boldness, stupidity and arrogance enough to assert of himself

that he is in possession of a "reason" or divine grace which is allegedly *independent* of concrete conditions.

From the multitude of problems and objections which must spring up here quite naturally, there is but one ordering way out: to recall the dictum that praxis is the criterion of truth. What psychology achieves in social research can be easily perceived by its dead fruits. Thus argumentation falls again back into parody and, together with Loki, lands once more upon Shakespeare: "Sweet are the uses of adversity".

That is the Ariadne-thread which leads the way through praxis and compels the "art of interpretation" to terminate as it was begun: with the struggle for the natural and self-evident. Art and freedom of interpretation, as they have been exercised here, lead first of all to the statement that they too . . . were none. They renounced the unfounded freedom which the psychologist assumes. They limited themselves to the elaboration of the fundamental traits and established who, from the sequence of oppositions, emerged as the victor in *praxis*. On the *bourgeois* side, the only victor was Richard Wagner, and the conclusion can only be: If not already born great, then Wagner *achieved* true greatness — he who was no rogue and only did what he *could*.

Arrived at this point, the dead Wagner seizes the living Adorno. To what do the innumerable reproaches and objective blindnesses on Adorno's part against Wagner amount? Factually to neither more nor less than the suspiciously zealous reproach that Wagner did *not* act like a rogue, which means: He ought to have done *more* than he could and *incomparably achieved*.¹²

One should expect that the critique which raves in such a way would at least now, 60 years after Wagner's death, be in a position to offer of *its own* that "plus" it demands of him and which, in the meantime, has become — more than possible. But far from it! First, the critique falls far behind Wagner and therefore even farther behind that plus which has now been long in existence. Second, its remedy revolves round vague recipes and consolations for which it has branded Wagner, following the thief's method of crying: Stop the thief. Certain orators may be "admired" because on every occasion they talk themselves into the mire. In order to convince oneself of the hopeless ad-miredness of psychoanalytical attempts with regard to social phenomena, the passage quoted above may be taken which deals with the forces becoming free in Wagner's works in the early period of bourgeois decay. This passage speaks volumes. With "but if", "perhaps once" and "then", it shows a rogue of a special kind, that is, one who voluntarily keeps himself at the sharpest edge between perception and infatuation.

Justice must and shall grant him: The revolution which Social-Democrats and "Communists" have truly betrayed has brought him with this betrayal to a very uncomfortable position. Originally he is not evil-minded, but he finds himself in the midst of the hopeless disintegration of the workers' movement, of democracy, etc., without social support for

¹² This, incidentally, is the attitude of all those very little educated people who, deeply dissatisfied with themselves and the world, present themselves as "fine fellows", have much critical sentiment, yet never dispose of one single idea of practical applicability.

his convictions and without real perspective. He censures Wagner who had referred to "the ideal core of his tendency" in order to escape "contact with the political excitement of the day". Yet his reproach has a grave blemish: he is in the same position himself and, with the purely "investigating", theoretical, academic, declamatory attitude of the "Institute for Social Research" which has been going on for years, he evades the political excitement of the day much more than the accused. He knows where the solution lies, but he does not know what could drag him up or down. He would like to go in the right direction, but something could happen to him (so he sacrifices his character and does what the German *vox populi* calls the endeavor to sit with one behind at two weddings). He arrives at "a sort of rehabilitation of the Wagnerian nihilism" and discovers in it many moments which are progressive and point forward. But as he misses the essential moment, so also his ceaseless denunciation of Wagner (for denunciation he eagerly reproaches Wagner) never passes beyond innuendos and very vague formulations of the moments in question. As *his* decisive finding he gives, at the end, an oracular revelation which, imperialistic through and through, lies in the sphere of (psychologically prepared) democratic-mystic consolation. It is the redemption by a leap into imagination, which leaves everything as it is under the protection of the Allies, and acquiesces in the grace which has led it to capitulation before the ruling power.

After Adorno has quoted the conclusion of Wagner's late essay on "Religion and Art" which treats with the possibility that "through an incalculable mistake all this could be blown into the air one day", the reader finds, coming doubly unexpectedly after such words, the following assertion:

"But [!] of this [that means: of being "blown into the air"! W.L.] Wagner's music knows more than the word".

This assertion is ten times more astounding if one recalls the moments on which in truth Wagner's *word and allegory* are based. These moments speak of nothing else but of the necessary downfall, of annihilation and being "blown into the air", indifferent to everything else including psychology. If this is, on the one hand, the point which gives Adorno inducement for manifold objections of a psychological and philosophical nature, he cannot, on the other hand, completely ignore it as the heart-piece of Wagner's conception and equips it (to be sure: not only with stupefying naïveté, but also "paradoxically enough") with a suddenly deeply dissatisfied "But". Now savor a last example of the contradictory urges of psychology.

Adorno begins the concluding section of his investigation with the words: "Wagner's work bears testimony of the early period of bourgeois decay".

That sounds "objective" and is supplemented by the sentence:

"In the allegory his urge for destruction anticipates that of society".

That, in its turn, renders completely incomprehensible the assertion about Wagner's music "knowing more", for, in the *allegory*, the matter becomes absolutely clear. In it, the *words* bear "testimony" to the knowledge of being "blown into the air" as unmistakably as the conclusion of the quoted essay. What, then, is rotten in the Institute? This:

Adorno holds, vis-à-vis Wagner, a (psychological) totalitarian standpoint. It is the claim to exclusiveness on the part of modern psychology which, as a true ideology in fearful suspicion of its weakness, demands: All or Nothing. But this "or" regularly turns under its hands into "and": All and Nothing. The beautiful objectivity of the early period of bourgeois decay is quietly withdrawn: now it is Wagner's or "his work's" urge for destruction which, in the allegory, anticipates that of society. Despite all his half-way ("*en quelque sorte*") "rehabilitation" of Wagner's nihilism (simultaneously denounced as "Utopia") and despite a flash now and then of insight into the real nature of the matter, the author acts too much in self-defense to be able to cope with Wagner. The result is known: Wagner's quite *consciously* and carefully designed foundation skeleton, *the sole guilt of the God ailing of himself*, is being completely missed, completely eliminated and, naturally, left completely unexploited.

For good reason: a mere mention of it would, of its own, have overthrown the whole psychological construction of Adorno, for it permits Wagner to treat psychology with the same contemptuous gesture with which Wotan "orders Hunding to go".¹³

Nevertheless, Adorno's blindness for the pivot of Wagner's conception is an excuse for the sentence, inexcusable without blindness, which asserts the mysterious "knowing more" on the part of the music. This sentence forms the bridge across which the psychological totality-claim (All) moves toward its definitive dissolution into the mystical consolation (the Nothing for which Wagner is being blamed with so much fuss). With music, one is already in the circle of the "chosen", for as soon as music is being "interpreted", there speaks the enlightened specialist who is able to lead the common man and even the amateur who plays the piano and violin "quite well", by the nose.

T. W. Adorno thus crosses the "more-knowing music" bridge and continues:

"Turning over, the guide [that is Wagner's music! W.L.] of the Unconscious becomes the first Conscious: the first over which perception disposes, and which can be appointed by perception for its purposes".

Imagine this plastically! The turned over guide of the Wagnerian word or whatever might be meant by the "Unconscious", becomes the first *conscious* (music or guide?) over which perception disposes.

It is not yet fully grasped: The *conscious* music or guide is the first turned over guide-music of the Unconscious which can be appointed by disposing perception for its purposes.

No! With the best of will, it is not to be unscrambled! To be prepared for all eventualities, in desperation there shall still be incorporated at

¹³ Of singular interest is the malevolent jargon with which Adorno assails Wagner's text. Thus he writes without any respect to the real event: "... the primeval husband Hunding is being sent to hell without much ado. But just the very contemptuous gesture of the hand with which Wotan orders Hunding to go, is once more a terrorist gesture". — The "terrorist gesture" is what, according to wise psychological calculation, had to be *suggested* at every turn. The "hell", however, is a stroke of the brush which sketches us a gruesome concentration camp. But, factually, Wotan says to Hunding: "Go then, serf! Kneel to Fricka: Tell her that Wotan's spear has avenged what brought her shame". Then he sends him with a contemptuous turn of the hand straight to . . . Valhalla to pay homage to "public opinion" which has defeated Wotan.

least a perception which disposes over a turned over first conscious music or guide and can appoint them for its purposes.

Oof! And all this after one has carefully shoved Wagner's conscious construction into the dark room of repressions, biological complexes, neuroses, etc., where is prepared and cooked, with convulsive effort, the dumpling of the "Unconscious" without which modern psychology would starve miserably from lack of sufficient stupidities. Who describes the indescribable astonishment in view of the monster which presents itself there trained in psychological liberty? For naturally the conscious music or the perception which disposes of this first conscious guide of the Unconscious is, because it is (great Gods, listen and avenge the noble art of printing!) a perception to boot which, apart from the "Conscious" and guide, disposes of no *first* conscious whatever . . . without any doubt this conscious and perception is, both in respect to Wagner and to all past, present and future, a nonsense before the dimensions of which even the strongest expletive collapses helplessly.

Should now the conscious guide suffer the lust of the power to dispose when perception appoints her for perception's purposes?

Hah! What purposes us there? Is it the "turbid" Eros? So it is! Gourmets who can divine the delights of Lesbian love (whether they like to talk about it, concerns the psychologist alone) would be well advised to prepare themselves for a first-class disappointment when "she" (the fair lady Perception) now "purposingly" violates the lady guide. One attends an act which, after hopeful excitation, ends without orgasm and leaves the ladies involved with a grave complex of frustration or inferiority. The act effectuates itself under the recital of a phonetic exercise which in certain German regions is cultivated by children and appears to have been directed for many decades already against modern psychology. Here it is:

If the purpose does not purpose the purpose which the purpose shall purpose, then the whole purpose has no purpose and is totally without purpose.

On then with the text as it continues (without omission) after the turned over guide:

"Not completely without legitimacy has Wagner compared himself with the interpreter of dreams rather than with the dreamer. But only he can interpret the dream who is weak and strong enough to surrender himself to it once more and completely. Tristan knows not only the ecstatic music of dream and death, not only the lust of the Unconscious which indeed 'no penance yet has cooled', because it is as unfree and unconscious lust as unattainable¹⁴ as happiness in Schopenhauer's philosophy, and which, therefore, disguises itself as penance. The fever parts of the third act of Tristan contain that black, sheer, torn music which not so much underpins the vision as unveils it. Music, the most enchanting of all arts, learns to break the spell it casts around all its creations. The cursing of Love by Tristan is more than the impotent sacrifice of ecstasy to asceticism: it is the rebellion of music against the compulsion of its own fate, and it is

¹⁴ Oh for life's gruesome complexities! Tristan *knows* the lust of the unconscious so well only, apparently, because it is *unconscious* and *unattainable*. Such expertness indeed has no penance yet cooled: cold water works miracles in such cases.

only in face of its total determination by the blind urge that it regains self-consciousness. It is not for nothing that those figures of the 'Tristan' score which follow the words 'the horrible potion' stand at the threshold of the new music; it is not for nothing that in the first canonical work of this new music, Schoenberg's quartet in F sharp minor, the words appear: 'Take love from me, give me your happiness'. They say that love and happiness are false in the world in which we live and that all power of love has been transformed into hatred against the existing. But whoever would be capable of tearing such metal from the waves of Wagner's orchestra, could from its altered sound derive that consolation which it stubbornly refuses with ecstasy and phantasmagoria. By pronouncing the fear of helpless men it could, however weak and disguised, mean help for the helpless, and could promise anew what the age-old protest of music promised: Live without Fear".

This, at long last, is (to the very last word) the result of social research: the full-sized monster, a gigantic disappointment, the vacuum, the nothing. One leans back exhausted; darkness falls around; quiet descends upon the battlefield. While one still reflects whether one would not prefer to embrace fear before the vacuum, the beloved Nestroy¹⁵ enters who, divinely, also dealt with Wagner and furnished better consolation. He pushes Wagner's Saint Elizabeth before him and makes her sing, in front of the vacuum, her great entry aria:

Again I greet thee, dearest hall of fairs!
Thee, fighting place of harpists, my beloved dairy!
Here, where but songs are heard and airs,
deep in my heart I feel so lustful airy!

Nothing is therefore lost: one cannot renounce the fruits of adversity! You ask, my dear Nestroy, what the two ladies are doing there and how do they feel?

Ah, therein consists the unfortunate calamity: they are doing nothing and feel miserable, very miserable! And they have every reason: In a world in which Adorno's false love reigns, even the hatred into which the broken "power" of false love has been transformed has become impotent. Let me explain the ladies' ignominious need:

Adorno has "characterized, all in all, the attitude of Wagner's music towards its subject as 'accompanying' ". Good! Good! Amen! But then music has rebelled against the compulsion of its own fate. After that it has as the "conscious" been "purposed". But the purpose has failed and now dame music waits for one more "capable" than perception. But capable of what? Why, to tear from the waves of Wagner's orchestra such (!?) metal (!?).

Dearest Nestroy: Such metal instead of conscious lust . . . what an impossible substitute! Deep-going analysis showed: The heavily afflicted ladies would enthusiastically exchange all the metal in the world (particularly "such" metal) for one waving ecstasy. Without inhibition they came out in favor of natural Nature and assured that for them even the most artfully fabricated metal had no power of attraction. They felt themselves

¹⁵ The greatest satirist in the German language, who, amongst some eighty plays, also wrote a parody on Wagner's "Tannhäuser".

attracted only by the obviously obvious: He who would be "capable", could really *do it* (namely effectively make love to us).

Is Schoenberg's music perhaps a consolation for the ladies, who belong to the helpless? Stay rather with Wagner:

You want to please the people,
me think it then but right
you should also learn from the people
whether this gave them delight.

Upon which Nestroy smilingly disappears and everything around becomes a few shades darker. The attitude of the new music *in toto* (however big the volume of the single symphony) is a romantical-reactionary one which "accompanies" the decay in detail. Such music drapes itself as "revolutionary", but of consoling substance, or substance at all, it yields just as much as modern psychology: the most banal trash in the most pretentious outfit, the nothing.

As if, truly, it were a matter of providing consolation however weak and disguised: How much rrrrevolutionary accompanying music has been loosed on the helpless! Once it is the anniversary of a murdered revolution and once the siege of Leningrad; once it is the pre-noons of the democrat Ivan and then again appears Leningrad's liberation. And if now Shostakovich announces his "ninth" symphony and promises that it will "give expression to the greatness of his people and to the victory of culture over barbarism" (newspaper report), then one should rather spit mightily upon his xylophone. Poor culture, if there it totters over the xylophone in the wooden shoes of a totally intimidated and unexampledly enslaved people! Will the "ninth" of Mr. Tirili Just-a-cough-each glorify the Russian "people"? By no means! It will, with equal convincing power of interpretation, represent a speech by Stalin or some bureaucrat who devotedly accuses himself before the tribunal of Mr. Vishinsky of having "secretly" celebrated orgies with Hitler in the Caucasus and of having then mobilized all the bed-bugs of Russia for the overthrow of Stalin.¹⁶

Therewith: Good night and . . . pleasant dreams.

¹⁶ Now, in July 1947, it can be added: Mr. Shostakovich has not executed his threat. Very much to the disgust of Stalin who, beside all other things, is also the musical pope of Russia, Shostakovich in his "Ninth" makes no attempt at depicting or glorifying anything except "*kitsch par excellence*". This changes nothing since it is nevertheless a steady victory of Russian barbarism over all culture which only lacks the make-up desired by Stalin.

Gobbledygook

" . . . Mr. I. B. Bugrov, the chief Byelo-Russian Government delegate, denounced Sir Richard Snedden's attack as 'most impertinent'. The normal work of the I.L.O. was being threatened by the representatives of the employers from capitalist countries. . . . The capitalist employers were 'afraid that the employers of the democratic, i.e., Communist countries would defend the rights of the workers in the I.L.O.'" (*Times*, 12th June, 1954).

N. Parker

THE BRITISH RAILWAY (WESTERN REGION) STRIKE — MAY, 1954

THE railway strike over lodging turns on the Western Region has shown once again in a clear and unmistakable way, the persistent betrayal of the interests of the rank and file by the union leadership. Mr. Deakin's promise of co-operation with the Government after the election, and later Mr. Butler's fulsome and grateful thanks to trade union leaders for fully carrying out their bargain of keeping the working population under control, reveals the consistent treachery of a bureaucracy which maintains itself in power by all the dirty tricks of delegated authority, block votes, intimidation and censorship, comfortably cushioned against deteriorating standards of living by handsome salaries.

What better testimonial from master to vassal, than the statement of Sir Ernest Lever, chairman and managing director of Richard Thomas and Baldwins Ltd., and chairman of the Steel Company of Wales, in a speech to Swansea Business Club, on the 21st May, 1954.

"Sir Ernest said that it was not the principal task of industry to provide employment. Industry's business was to make things that could be sold, and to make them as efficiently and as cheaply as possible. The less labour required for the efficient performance of that task the better industry was doing its job, 'and when it does its job this way, full employment, coupled with a rising standard of life, will be an automatic by-product'.

"In the iron and steel industry,' he said, 'I have been deeply impressed by the statesmanlike approach of our trade union colleagues towards our common problems. Indeed, but for this we should not have been able to get on as fast as we have with the modernization of processes in the tinplate industry.' Those in charge of the trade unions knew that the survival of the industries which made Wales prosperous depended on the development of schemes involving the replacement of much human labour by machines and electronic devices. 'They have proved to be men of vision, capable of seeing eye to eye with the other visionaries who foresaw the need for these dramatic changes.'" (*Manchester Guardian*, 22.5.54.)

That the trade unions are actually business undertakings having substantial property and investments which must show a return, explains the driving force behind their policy, the purpose of which is not the welfare of the workers, but of their own pockets.

The vital interest this trade union bureaucracy has in protecting and maintaining these privileges and profits at the expense of those whose interests they pretend to serve, is well demonstrated by the workmanlike and "realistic" partnership with big business on such matters as wage restraint, de-nationalization, double shift working, illegal strikes, and more immediately, the imposition of extra lodging turns on the railway crews in the face of intense and widespread opposition.

This shameless selling-out of the workers' interest by the union leadership is well illustrated by a quotation from the *Manchester Guardian* of 25.5.54, which provides the background to the present flare-up.

"In February, 1951, in return for a general wage increase that added some £12 millions a year to the railways' wages bill, the main railway trade unions signed an undertaking which declared:

"The union representatives acknowledge the imperative need of the fullest co-operation with the Railway Executive in the elimination of waste of manpower, in increasing efficiency, and improving productivity within the railway industry.

"The running of long-distance trains with fewer crews by working 'lodging turns' was one of these 'imperative needs'."

The events leading up to the present strike show the now familiar cynical overruling of the wishes of the rank and file — the majority, by the union executive — the minority. I quote from the *Observer* of 23rd May, 1954.

"Members of the strike committee are for the most part regular union officials from the branches. They feel strongly that no one has adequately given their point of view and that the reasons for the strike have been played down and misrepresented. Their distrust of the union leadership, though they are careful not to voice it, is unmistakable.

"By implication, the leadership is blamed for having agreed with the Railway Executive to the new arrangement for extra lodging turns for the crews when it knew that at least twenty resolutions hostile to lodging turns had been put down by the branches for discussion at the forthcoming annual conference of the A.S.L.E.F. That this hostility is not confined to the striking depots is confirmed they feel, by the sympathetic support they have privately received from the Midland Region, from Scotland, Ireland and from the North-Eastern Region, where footplate men also struck on the same issue in 1949.

"A member of the strike committee, a 56-year-old working express driver whose maximum wage after over thirty years' experience is £8 18s. a week, in an interview with *The Observer*, put the point of view of the men.

"We are contesting this issue at the present time, not on the number of extra lodging turns imposed, but because we feel that it is the thin end of the wedge towards reverting to the large number of "double home" turns worked under pre-war conditions."

"(Before the war, Western Region train crews worked about 1,300 lodging turns a year. All except a few were dropped during the war. The present figure is about 300, most of which are for long-distance passenger trains.)

"At that time,' the driver went on, 'and particularly at Old Oak Common we had to start this type of work about half-way through our careers as engine-drivers and firemen with, say, one week of lodging turn work in every ten. This increased as we progressed in seniority through the different "links" to as many as nine weeks of lodging turns in ten. This meant that in each of these nine weeks, we were spending three or four nights away from home.

"This meant a loss of home life and has been known to result in the

breaking up of homes. Many men to-day say they have never seen their kiddies grow up and now in old age they don't intend to leave their wives on their own.

"A lot of the Press have said that we work one way and travel home as passengers. This is the case in some instances. But mostly we have been working our way down and back — to Swindon, Oxford, Reading, Westbury and Banbury for example, we work down and back. It shouldn't be beyond the ability of the management to plan the work so that we could work both ways on all occasions.

"While we object to lodging in any form, it is true to say that lodges are not as in the picture given by the management. At Old Oak Common (where there is a hostel) the accommodation for "double home" work, while not as glamorous as has been painted, is probably the best afforded anywhere. But the management state that where hostel accommodation is not provided, every care is taken that the men have a comfortable life.

"Now recently, at one lodge at Newton Abbot, the men when they arrived in the small hours of the morning had to go straight upstairs to bed with their dirty, sweaty clothes and no chance of making a cup of tea to warm them. After complaints, this lodge was taken off the list. They said they would provide a better one, but on going to the "better lodge" our men were intercepted by a friendly policeman who advised them not to go there.

"We have not had these lodging turns for freight trains in the Western Region since 1941 and we see no reason for their reintroduction now."

The Western Region strike found wide support amongst drivers and footplate men of the North Eastern and Eastern Regions who, threatened with the same breaking up of family life by the unnecessary imposition of lodging turns, agreed to come out on strike in support.

Meanwhile at the annual general conference of the union (the A.S.L.E.F.), held while the strike was in process, the union leadership was compelled to accept a change in official policy from acceptance to complete rejection of lodging turns. In consequence, at the very point when the men of the N.E. and E. Regions were to come out in support of the Western Region strike, it was called off after a nine-hour meeting held behind closed doors between the representatives of the strikers and union officials. The end of the strike (against the wishes of some of the strikers, notably at Old Oak Common) by no means signifies that the question of lodging turns has been settled according to the will of those who participated in it. It signifies only that the men have been induced by their own representatives in agreement with the official leadership to go back to work, in return for a mere promise of negotiations between the union officials and the Railway Executive which however has already made it plain that as far as *it* is concerned, ending lodging turns could only be done at the expense of the workers in other ways (wage increases were specifically mentioned).

That the bureaucrats have once again betrayed the interests of the workers by this disgraceful compromise shows that the working men will need to find ways of conducting their struggle for better conditions outside the framework of bureaucratic institutions.

MATERIAL AND DOCUMENTS

THE CASE OF BURTON ROSEN

WE call the attention of our American readers, in particular, to the case of Burton Rosen, now occupying a cell in a Chicago jail for his refusal to register under the selective service act for induction into the armed forces. Rosen's case is unique among conscientious objectors, for he is challenging the constitutionality of the selective service act as an atheist.

Specifically, it is Rosen's contention — and there is every reason to believe he is correct — that a section of the law denying those who are not religious the right to exemption as conscientious objectors is in violation of the constitutional provision prohibiting Congress from making any law tending to establish a religion. Rosen bases his conscientious objection to the madness of war not on religious grounds but on political and sociological ones.

Rosen, the first to challenge the selective service law on these grounds, has faced up to the consequences with courage. He refused to register for the draft despite the fact that a physical disability made it almost certain that he would be disqualified from actual military service. He is now serving the first year of a four-year prison term for this refusal.

Despite the portentous issues involved, Rosen's claim has thus far received a legal brush-off, with the government evading a clear-cut fight on the principles by means of a legal evasion, namely, the contention that the provisions governing registration and conscientious objection are "separable" and that Rosen has forfeited the right to contend the religious issue by refusing to register. The judge, in convicting Rosen, upheld this contention, leaving Rosen the alternative of sitting out four years in jail or appealing to the higher courts in an attempt to establish the unconstitutional religious bias of the selective service law in holding that only theological belief can inspire a principled abhorrence of war.

The appeal has run up against financial barriers. Rosen's case is neither widely known nor popular; even the traditional pacifist organizations, motivated for the most part by religious scruples, have failed to lend much assistance. That is all the more reason why Rosen, who is acting as an individual without the backing of any group or organization, is deserving of support in his legal fight from all who are concerned with governmental arbitrariness and blind militarism. **The Rosen Defense Committee, 6043 South Peoria St., Chicago, 21, Ill.,** has issued an appeal for funds to finance the appeal. We urge our readers to respond with generosity.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. "WE WILL NOT MOVE"

[Our friends in South Africa write to us as follows about the meeting they held at Sophiatown (Johannesburg) on 29th November, 1953, to protest against the Government's proposed removal of the African population of the township under the terms of the Group Areas Legislation.]

Johannesburg,
17th December, 1953.

OUR Sophiatown meeting was a strange kettle of fish. There is no doubt that we created a stir and took off to a good start. But our success came from quite unanticipated circumstances. Our planful expectations failed to materialize, and the unforeseen events (introduced by our enemies) were utilized by us to convert sabotage to our advantage. The whole atmosphere was so altogether different from anything so far experienced in London or America, that we are set upon describing the eventful morning in more detail than is our wont. Is it not true that our peripheral continent is being dragged into modern fascism and has, on the basis of its original backwardness, advanced retrogressive lessons to teach? . . . It goes without saying that much has to be left out. I will only give one or two examples of replies to questions to illustrate the general pattern we established of turning purely personal, formal and vacuous attacks into political content. The meeting also dealt far more than will appear from the following with the actual concrete events of removal, for I have left out details of my speech and questions relating to removal. I stress the enemy aspects of our meeting deliberately to bring out the organized viciousness of competition here.

Lill and I (the only two whites present) turned up to the meeting sharp at 9.30 a.m., and for nearly an hour had the disagreeable experience of being the only tenacious inhabitants of the hall. There was a group of people outside, milling around in the lingo, but, except for an occasional and migratory individual, there was no attempt to come into the hall. Slightly within the hour our own people (four in number) turned up from Alexandra and Orlando. With exploratory tentacles of the right pigmentation we discovered that a few of the A.N.C.'ers* were attempting to send away the people outside by distributing a roneod notice of a rival meeting of the A.N.C. to be held at another point in the area. Dan and I invited the people in and the meeting was declared open. At this stage the attendance was thirty. Naïvely we imagined that our platform would now come into its beautifully arranged stride. Speeches for the detailed development of the leaflet** had been divided between Josiah Kumalo, myself and Dan Mokonyane. Jose, as the opening speaker, was to present the historical

* Members of the African National Congress.

** *We Will Not Move*, published in *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 5, No. 17 (April-May, 1954), pp. 61-64. Readers wanting copies of the leaflet are asked to write to us at either our London or Johannesburg address.

background of oppressive legislation in Africa, the uninterrupted purport of which was the creation, through evictions and resettlements of the people, of cheap migratory labour. I was to show, quoting and investigating into the contemporary Group Areas legislation, that the labour policy was no longer dependence upon the more wasteful, unsettled migratory system (a shuttle-service between the Reserves and the Towns) but committed, rather more, to direct labour control through the creation of large shanty areas immediately adjacent to the towns for bound labour for the mines and farms. Dan was to deal with the resistance to removal through political non-collaboration and the tactic of boycott.

Kumalo began and bedlam broke loose. The two most vociferous "agents" of disruption — a fat man with a stick and an "intellectual" in a brown blazer — lashed around physically and verbally. Their aim was obviously to create a disturbance and in this way succeed either in driving the audience away or in getting us arrested. From the smiles on the faces of the three white and one coloured Criminal Investigation Department detectives present the chances of the agents succeeding at this stage were expected to be a good bet. Reason for the racket was, first of all, a demand from these two and the few others that an interpreter be provided. This was met by Kumalo switching his speech from English to the vernacular. By doing this he gained only their brief attention and the clamour now nourished itself around the question of a Chairman. It was objected that Kumalo could not act both in the capacity of Speaker and Chair. The demand (still mainly from the fat man) was that somebody from Sophiatown be nominated for the Chair and voted for by the House. Kumalo resisted the proposal and the shouting took on a new lease of life — though you must understand that yelling and shouting had been the technique all the time. At this stage (something that took a long time to effect) I decided to drop my "inferior" position as a white man and to take an active part in the conduct of the meeting. I advocated acceptance of their proposal and in this way eventually punctured this further invented source of their shouting. A brief disconcerted silence followed, nominations were called for and not forthcoming, and the yelling continued stripped of any pretence at a reason. Previously two of the C.I.D. chaps had slipped out of the hall to call, as we learnt later, uniformed men for police intervention. It had looked then as though the agents would succeed in their job of making possible technical interference on the basis of "creating a public disturbance". Fortunately, however, quite some time elapsed before the arrival of the police and we were able to get the meeting entirely under control.

Earlier Lill and I and Ethan Mayisela had been in favour of declaring the meeting closed, but our excellent Kumalo insisted simply that we had a serious audience and that the provocateurs would end up by being exposed. This turned out to be the case. But the greatest single contributing factor was undoubtedly the audience. Most of them had come on the basis of reading the leaflet. In this way they were an attendance selected in advance, highly literate and serious. We learnt that they had refused to be turned away outside the hall on the plea that "we must give these people a hearing and debate properly any disagreements we might have with them". Throughout the fracas in the hall itself they waited on patiently, took no

part in the self-inspired isolated work of the saboteurs, and our own people abstained in the same way with stolid indifference. It was to us a fine little example of quality being decisive, of a meeting called on a proper basis dispelling all attempts to organize backwardness.* How complete our victory was, was demonstrated just before the arrival of the police. The loud-mouthed interferers suddenly rose in their phalanx of five or six, shouted the clenched-fist call of "Afrika", but, quite unlike the pied piper, led out only themselves in defeated isolation. At this point we took over. In the meantime, the audience had swollen to one hundred, practically filling the hall, and there was peace in the land. Quietly the disrupters returned to join an attentive audience.

What followed was unfortunately a one-man show. My previous intervention to bring about order had steadily edged me into the picture and it was agreed by Kumalo that it would be best for me to take the main hand. With the approval of the audience I was accepted as the next speaker and the constituted Chairman. It was now 11.15 a.m. — how long that forty-five minutes! Robbed as we had been of much time, I was interested in a short provocative platform to induce (as is always our emphasis) an unimpaired discussion from the floor. I therefore jettisoned my prepared speech and went over shortly to impress upon the audience the main forced labour intentions of the Verwoerd scheme, making unqualified resistance to it (non-collaboration) the only path, and outlined the appropriateness of boycott as the weapon in the circumstances. I had hardly finished when the police arrived in force. For ardent lovers of statistics I record: the Law, induced into every exaggeration by the ideological hysteria of the Minister of Injustice, C. R. Swart, made a dramatic entry and lined the back wall of the hall, comprising: four C.I.D. in plain clothes; five commissioned officers in uniformed regalia; outside the hall a number of ordinary policemen and an *entourage* of five pick-up vans. . . . The meeting was under fine control, the reinforcements baulked of their quarry, and everybody carried on — the bulk of the audience as passive but sympathetic friends, and the agents as enemies.

Came the spate of questions and insinuations from those originally sent to break up the meeting. These chaps together with some other "leaders" in quick succession put the heat on me. Whenever Kumalo, quite naturally, as part of the platform, attempted to reply, they shouted him down and demanded that only I be allowed to attend to their interrogation. For convenience I divide the questions into three kinds.

The one batch of questions and pretended arguments were designed to alienate me from the audience. At first they would have it that I was unknown, the "leaders" had never ever seen me before. To pacify them I was forced to furnish details of our [i.e. Mr. and Mrs. Swart's] participation in the Alexandra bus boycott of 1942-43 and of our subsequent political achievements in helping to produce *Contemporary Issues*, *Dinge der Zeit*, etc. The older folk remembered our contributions to the bus boycott and the tack was changed. I was suddenly now very well known — a cousin of C. R. Swart — nay, a brother, — and asked to go back to my

* We hope this will serve as a practical lesson for some of our friends in America and here who thought the leaflet would prove too difficult. — E.V.S.

Nationalist *milieu* and have done. From the start, and naturally throughout, I was attacked as a white man. This particular sally redounded very much to our credit. I was able to call the bluff of their so-called nationalism. I emphasized the fact that their suspicions were extremely healthy. White society had been the oppressor of the African (and related minority groups) for three hundred years and no white man could be given an unconsidered benefit of the doubt. Deep suspicion and hatred of the white man in general was the living basis of the national liberatory movement. Despite this, it was necessary, however, to return the majority struggle to proper political lines on the assessment of participants in the work of the movement. In the struggle we were committed to non-collaboration with *Herrenvolk* rule, and anybody, whether white, black, or of any other colour who preached non-collaboration and proceeded to break his correct commitment in practice — the breach between word and deed — was to be judged accordingly and declared to be an enemy of the movement. Such treatment was already badly overdue as far as prominent "leaders" of the A.N.C. were concerned. The question of correct political appraisals was entirely above the colour question.

Another batch of questions can only be described as calculated to furnish evidence against me for the police. Encouraged, no doubt, by the august and multiplied presence of the Law, they proceeded to serve it. My past was delved into. At this point I told them that anything they wanted to know about me was fully covered by police dossiers at Marshall Square [the Johannesburg equivalent of Scotland Yard — Ed.] and that they should direct their questions accordingly. To keep the record clean, however, I replied simply that I certainly had been a member of a Trotskyist movement — the Workers' International League — during the second world war. I insisted, however, that I was no longer a Trotskyist, and that meaningful questions should rather be directed at and concerned with my reasons for resigning from that organization. My past duly attested, the small handful of judges applied themselves scurvily to the leaflet. Was it not true that with its title of *We Will Not Move* we had come to incite the people into disobedience of the Law? And further along these lines: the weapon of boycott was negative and not to be relied on, and were we not prepared to recommend a more straight-forward (!) type of attack?

The "foundation" used to justify their inquisitorial babblings was the crass assumption, stated overtly towards the end, that only the A.N.C. had the right to serve the African people in their affairs. Why had we not approached the accredited leaders of the township to sue for permission to hold our meeting? It was again possible to turn this attack to our advantage. Our function as a movement was to be nothing more than to act as "pioneers" to the national struggle along the lines of non-collaboration. It was our task in free and open discussion with individuals from every conceivable organization to determine the correct political path for the people in struggle for each concrete objective. The path once set as principled commitment and the relevant weapon indicated, it was precisely the duty and work of each individual who agreed to implement the right course inside the existing peoples' organizations. We could merely, on every occasion, where necessary, "initiate" and the rest was up to them. The more organizations there were correctly serving a concrete issue, throwing

in their organized forces to help ameliorate the conditions of the people in abject misery, winning for them a way out, the better it would be for the national movement throughout the whole of Africa.

The whole conduct of the meeting — of patiently explaining and introducing political content into the empty attacks — was sandpaper to the wounds of irritated and impotent prestige. Our final scotching of the competitive viewpoint in the national movement aggravated the situation very nicely. At this point the "leaders" overreached themselves very badly. The chap in the blazer, allowed by me to speak for the fourth time, and as the last speaker, treated us to the most hysterical language. *In extremis*, he dictated the monopolistic position of the A.N.C., with Russia and the glorious Chinese revolution as the pathfinders and spearheads of the whole movement (by the way most of the disrupters were Communist Party people). His position being the self-evident case, and on a pinnacle of emotion, he threatened us with eviction from the township, assured us that the Mathabe hall [in which the meeting was being held] would in future only be available for approved organizations, and so on. The silent and hitherto patient ranks of the audience at last turned against him. Shouts went forth about "threats", etc. On a note of triumph we were able to declare the meeting closed.

In conclusion our resolution* was read out and a vote taken. Response to it must, I think, be taken by no means as a simple matter. While nobody voted in favour of the resolution, *nobody* (not even the "leaders") *voted against it*. This concretely demonstrated to us, what had been apparent throughout, that the audience was at least passively in our favour. As an organization we are new, small, altogether unexpected, and we cannot hope from one solitary meeting to overcome the conservative drag in favour of known and established organizations. None the less, the passive support is an encouraging omen of things to come. It must be understood that the mood of the people in the African National Congress and South African Indian Congress is simmering for a break away against the unprincipled reigning bureaucracy in these organizations. Involved is the road of non-collaboration we were attempting to pioneer. As recently as July of this year, at a joint conference of the A.N.C. and S.A.I.C., a resolution in favour of non-collaboration was voted in as policy, and the old leaders are frantically and loudly attempting to stem the tide. The younger leaders are attempting to bring the practice of the organizations into conformity with conference decision. We address ourselves to a healthy split in opinion and determination, and look forward to working more closely with the younger men in an A.N.C. organization called the Africa Youth League. A start has already been made with a few of the leading individuals.

Accompanied by one or two sympathizers, our people left the hall tired out. It had been a very difficult meeting to hold, to be compared most fittingly to a boxing match without intervals. Having been treated as the main punch bag, I expressed disappointment at the outcome only to be

* The resolution reads: "This meeting resolves to resist the white government's Removal Scheme for Western Areas. We do not acknowledge their authority over the affairs of the majority based, as it is, entirely on oppression, and see in non-collaboration the only path for political struggle. We at this meeting are determined not to move, and commit ourselves to support every means of boycott."

pounced upon by those better informed of recent political events in South Africa. Our triumph lay in the very protracted and wearying struggle itself: in the simple fact that we had been able to handle the organized liquidators and get our platform (however atomized) across. Other existing oppositional groups to the A.N.C. have, through the years, not been able to hold a meeting in Sophiatown at all. Either they have failed to rally an attendance of more than five or six people, or they have allowed themselves to be broken up by thugs. The way, it appears, is hard and we shall have to learn the hard way.

Our intention is to hold meetings in all the affected areas. . . .

E. V. SWART.

2.

P.O. Box 14
Haifa, Israel
10th January, 1954.

Mr. H. Levine
Contemporary Press
545 Fifth Avenue
New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Levine:

I have your letter of the 22nd ult., as well as the copy of *Contemporary Issues*, both of which I read with much interest. I was particularly impressed by Mr. Ecker's article *Towards a Solution in Palestine*. Although it contains a few mistakes of fact and errors of deduction, the article is a lucid exposition of the psychological considerations and political factors of the problem.

You referred in the second paragraph of your letter to my analysis of the "Absentee Property Law of 1950", which appeared in the June and July, 1951, issues of *Ner*. But this law is no longer of much importance. It is eclipsed by a more oppressive enactment that hits hard the non-absentee-Arab farmers lawfully present in the country. It strips them of some 300,000 metric dunams (75,000 acres) of agricultural land which they own by virtue of incontestable title-deeds. It is this law, the destruction of Arab villages, sometimes by the military authorities and sometimes by neighboring Kibbutzim, and the scattering of the villagers as well as many other humiliating practices which bring out the true aggressiveness of the Zionist Movement and the hostile intentions of the Israel Government. You will find an analysis of the provisions of this law and of my reply to the comments of the Israel Representative in Washington, in the April and July, 1953, issues of *Ner* which, I think, you may be able to obtain from the Jewish Newsletter at your end.

You also complained of the sketchy and distorted version of any material relating to the Arabs of Israel when published in the American or Zionist press. The Arabs of Israel complain too from similar distortion. The responsible Ministers here make, from time to time, blatant misrepresentations. They picture the Arabs as living in a terrestrial paradise. They gloss

over the oppressive and discriminatory laws, the taking away of Arab land, the restricting of their movement, the curtailing of the opportunity of work for Arab workmen, the exploiting of Arab produce, the mediocre standard of Arab education, the demolishing of Arab villages, the dispersing of Arab villagers, the depriving of the Moslem community of the control and management of their religious endowments. These and many other wrongs are invariably quenched by fantastic explanations. The Jewish people are kept in the dark and little effort is made by the press to enlighten public opinion.

I hesitate to agree with you that the present division of Palestine would not permit Jordan to live. The Arab part of the country has been merged in Transjordan, socially, economically and politically. Of course, the present partition is not conducive to the prosperity of the country, nor to the betterment of the standard of living. But, I believe, that, ultimately, a confederation would be formed between Iraq, Syria and Transjordan, or, at least, between Iraq and Transjordan, in which event, conditions in Transjordan will be greatly improved. Israel, however, will continue to live on outside help, and its economic situation would remain precarious.

Arab-Jewish relations were, on the whole, good during the Mandatory régime. Apart from sporadic disturbances arising from Zionist political activities and Arab opposition and agitation, and resulting in a few Arabs and a handful of Jews killed and wounded, the two peoples lived side by side on friendly terms. No real enmity arose in consequence of these turbulent periods, and as soon as the tension disappeared — it usually faded away in a remarkably short time — the two sections of the population fraternized together, resumed their commercial and social relations, and soon forgot the painful events of the days that passed by. But now things have changed; feelings are inflamed and what appears to be an indestructible wall of enmity divides them.

I am really unable to conceive of a way out from the present stalemate. The problem was difficult and intricate without the complications that occurred since the United Nations resolved to dissect the country. It seems to me that it is no longer for the Arabs a question of the return of the refugees, of the payment of compensation for abandoned property, or of the modification of the boundaries. It is rather a question of the existence in the midst of the Arab world of an alien state with territorial ambitions and political aims that might run counter to Arab interests and be detrimental to Arab unity. The irritating utterances of the Jewish political parties, the imprudent statements of the Zionist leaders and the menacing attitude of the Israeli authorities have given rise in responsible Arab circles to strong fears and suspicions. Unfortunately, the policy of the Government *vis-à-vis* the Arab community of Israel is so hostile that it tends to fortify rather than to remove the fears and mistrust. It is only natural that in an atmosphere permeated with suspicion and antagonism no friendly relations could be cultivated.

The Government of Israel has lost three golden opportunities to conclude peace and to win the trust and goodwill of its Arab neighbors. Had the Israeli leaders appealed shortly after the truce, to the Arab refugees to return home and live in peace and friendship with the Jews in the Jewish

State, the refugees would have willingly come back and whole-heartedly identified themselves with the State. There was so much disillusionment, disappointment and disaffection among their rank and file because of the short-sightedness and personal rivalries of the Arab States which had made them homeless and destitute, that the appeal would have been taken as a true demonstration of Israel's good intentions dispelling, for good and all, the fears and suspicions which they felt in consequence of their leaders' assertions. Israel lost the second opportunity during the lifetime of King Abdullah who was eager to befriend it. But Israel's refusal to meet him half-way frustrated his efforts. The third opportunity presented itself in 1951 when a proposal was put by the Arabs at the session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in Paris, that mixed Arab-Israel committees be set up to consider all issues in dispute with a view to reaching an overall settlement. The proposal was discarded.*

I think you are right that the only possible settlement of the problem is one that would envisage the creation of an independent State of Palestine, neither Arab nor Jewish, where all communities would enjoy complete equality of rights and duties. Such a state would form an integral part of the Middle East and become a member of the Arab League. The Arabs are tolerant and hospitable. During Arab rule, as distinct from Ottoman rule, the Jews were not molested. They were treated on the basis of complete equality of citizenship. They held many important key positions in the government, and exercised powerful influence in matters of national and international significance. Indeed, the extent of their influence in Egypt during the Fatemite dynasty may well be assessed from the following verses by a contemporary Arab poet: —

The Jews of this age have reached the peak of
their ambitions and attained governorship;

Power and wealth are theirs,
Counsellors and Governors come from their ranks;

Egyptians, I have advised you to get Judaised
For, lo, Heaven has become Jewish.

Even in Iraq, the Jews held many important posts in the Government up to 1951, and at present there are many Jews in Iraq, Lebanon and Egypt engaged in all walks of life without discrimination or molestation. There is no reason why they should not be able to live with the Arabs on friendly and peaceful terms in an independent state of that kind. But would Israel agree to such a sweeping solution? I think not.

... I do not know whether any books were published in the Arab countries on the subject [Arab-Jewish relations. — Ed.], for I have not left the country since the birth of the State. I am not permitted to go out, not even to cross to the Old City to perform my religious duties on Christmas. The Government here does not view with favor my political activities. Its vindictiveness has not spared my innocent wife and minor son. For three consecutive years we have been prevented from going to the Old City

* We hope to present different views of these opportunities in future articles — Editor.

because of these activities. If, however, there is any information which you may wish to have on the conditions of the Arabs in Israel, I shall be too happy to supply it. . . .

Yours faithfully,
E. N. KOUSSA.

3. HOW FREE IS PUERTO RICO?

To the Editor:

Reprints are available of my *Symposium: Is Puerto Rico Fully Self-Governing?* It was printed in the autumn, 1953, *Journal of Human Relations*, published quarterly by Central State College of Wilberforce, Ohio. As editor of the section, Human Frontiers, and a teacher of Social Science, I feel that this study involves an international issue so important for world human relations that the life or death of the United Nations, even, may turn upon it.

The Government claims that Puerto Rico is fully self-governing because her people freely chose the new status of "free association". But probably two-thirds of the voters did not vote for the question; of whom a majority, probably, deliberately boycotted what the Independentist Party (the second largest) had officially called a "bogus constitution".

Here you will find edited, mainly from the materials submitted to the United Nations, the best possible case that could be found for each side in one of the most hotly-contested issues which has come before the United Nations. The conclusion is an interpretive analysis of the international implications of the issue as it involves the problem of "free association" in any kind of union of nations, states, dependencies, etc. "Contents" with page numbering and a suitable cover have been added, and the pamphlet can be secured for 25c or in quantities at \$1.50 for ten, at the address below.

RALPH T. TEMPLIN,
Route 1, Cedarville, Ohio.

Not to Mention the Funds!

... "Peace in any industry is something which cannot be expected, and if such a state of affairs did prevail it would cause apathy amongst our members resulting in a marked effect on trade union activities."—L. Price, area official, writing in the *Journal of the Electrical Trades Union*. (*Electrical Times*, 11th February, 1954.)